

THE
L I F E
AND
O P I N I O N S
OF
TRISTRAM SHANDY,
GENTLEMAN.
IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOLUME I.

Sterne (X)



L O N D O N :

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OFFICIALS



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GENTLEMAN.

Ταρασσει τὸς Ἄνδρες ἢ τὰ Πράγματα, ἀλλὰ τὰ
περὶ τῶν Πραγμάτων, Δογματῶν.

V O L. I.

THE

FILE

AND

OPINIONS



ERISTRAM SHANDY

GENTLEMAN

Presented to the Trustees of the British Museum
by the Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies

VOL. I

DEDICATION
To the RIGHT HONOURABLE

MR. PITT T.

SIR,

NEVER poor Wight of a Dedicator had less hopes from his Dedication, than I have from this of mine; for it is written in a bye corner of the kingdom, and in a retired thatch'd house, where I live in a constant endeavour to fence against the infirmities of ill health, and other evils of life; by mirth; being firmly persuaded that every time a man smiles—but much more so, when he laughs, that it adds something to this Fragment of Life.

I humbly beg, Sir, that you will honour this book by taking it—(not under your Protection,—it must protect itself, but) ---into the country with you; where, if I am ever told, it has made you smile, or can conceive it has beguiled you of one moment's pain----I shall think myself as

DEDICATION.

happy as a minister of state——perhaps much happier than any one (one only excepted) that I have ever read or heard of.

I am, great Sir,

and what is more to your Honour,)

I am, good Sir,

Your Well-wisher,

and most humble Fellow-Subject,

THE AUTHOR.
I have from this Dedication, written in a bye corner of the kingdom, where I live in a constant endeavour to fence against the infinities of ill health, and other evils of life, by mirth; being firmly persuaded that every time a man smiles—but much more so, when he laughs, that it adds something to this fragment of life.

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THE
LIFE and OPINIONS
OF
TRISTRAM SHANDY, Gt.



CHAP. I.

I Wish either my father or my mother, or indeed both of them, as they were in duty both equally bound to it, had minded what they were about when they begot me; had they duly considered how much depended upon what they were then doing;—that not only the production of a rational being was concern'd in it, but that possibly the happy formation and temperature of his body, perhaps his genius and the very cast of his mind;—and, for aught they knew to the contrary, even the fortunes of his whole house might take their turn from the humours and dis-

positions which were then uppermost:—Had they duly weighed and considered all this, and proceeded accordingly,—I am verily persuaded I should have made a quite different figure in the world, from that, in which the reader is likely to see me—Believe me, good folks, this is not so inconsiderable a thing as many of you may think it;—you have all, I dare say, heard of the animal spirits, as how they are transfused from father to son, &c. &c.—and a great deal to that purpose:—Well, you may take my word, that nine parts in ten of a man's sense or his nonsense, his successes and miscarriages in this world depend upon their motions and activity, and the different tracts and trains you put them into; so that when they are once set a-going, whether right or wrong, 'tis not a half-penny matter,—away they go clattering like hey-go-mad, and by treading the same steps over and over again, they presently make a road of it, as plain and as smooth as a garden-walk, which, when they are once used to, the Devil himself sometimes shall not be able to drive them off it.

Pray, my dear, quoth my mother, have you not forgot to wind up the clock?—Good G—! cried my father, making an exclamation, but taking care to moderate his voice at the same time, —Did ever woman, since the creation of the world, interrupt a man with such a silly question? Pray, what was your father saying?—Nothing.

C H A P. II.

Then, positively, there is nothing in the question, that I can see, either good or bad.——Then let me tell you, Sir, it was a very unseasonable question at least,——because it scattered and dispersed the animal spirits, whose business it was to have escorted and gone hand-in-hand with the HOMUNCULUS, and conducted him safe to the place destined for his reception.

The HOMUNCULUS, Sir, in how-ever low and ludicrous a light he may appear, in this age of levity, to the eye of folly or prejudice;——to the eye of reason in scientifick research, he stands confess'd——a BEING guarded and circumscribed with rights:——The minutest philosophers, who, by the bye, have the most enlarged understandings (their souls being inversely as their enquiries) shew us uncontestably, That the HOMUNCULUS, is created by the same hand,——engender'd in the same course of nature,——endowed with the same locomotive powers and faculties with us:——That he consists, as we do, of skin, hair, fat, flesh, veins, arteries, ligaments, nerves, cartilages, bones, marrow, brains, glands, genitals, humours and articulations;——is a being of as much activity,——and, in all senses of the word, as much and as truly our fellow-creature, as my Lord Chancellor of England.——He may be benefited, he may be injured,——he may obtain redress;——in a word, he has all the claims and rights of humanity, which Tully, Puffendorf, or

the best ethick writers allow to arise out of that state and relation.

Now, dear Sir, what if any accident had befallen him in his way alone?—or that, thro' terror of it; natural to so young a traveller, my little gentleman had got to his journey's end miserably spent;—his muscular strength and virility worn down to a thread;—his own animal spirits ruffled beyond description,—and that in this sad disordered state of nerves, he had laid down a prey to sudden starts, or a series of melancholy dreams and fancies for nine long months together.—I tremble to think what a foundation had been laid for a thousand weaknesses both of body and mind, which no skill of the physician or the philosopher could ever afterwards have set thoroughly to rights.

C H A P. III.

TO my uncle Mr. Toby Shandy, do I stand indebted for the preceding anecdote, to whom my father, who was an excellent natural philosopher, and much given to close reasoning upon the smallest matters, had oft, and heavily complain'd of the injury; but once more particularly, as my uncle Toby well remember'd, upon his observing a most unaccountable obliquity, (as he call'd it) in my manner of setting up my top, and justifying the principles upon which I had done it,—the old gentleman shook his head, and in a tone more expressive by half of sorrow than reproach,—he said his heart all along foreboded, and he saw it verified in this, and from a thousand other observations he had made

made upon me, That I should never think nor act like any other man's child:—But alas! continued he, shaking his head a second time, and wiping away a tear which was trickling down his cheeks, My Tristram's misfortunes began nine months before ever he came into the world.

———My mother, who was sitting by, look'd up,———but she knew no more than her backside what my father meant,——but my uncle Mr. Toby Shandy, who had been often informed of the affair,——understood him very well.

CH A P. IV.

I Know there are readers in the world, as well as many other good people in it, who are no readers at all,—who find themselves ill at ease, unless they are let into the whole secret, from first to last of every thing which concerns you.

It is in pure compliance with this humour of theirs, and from a backwardness in my nature to disappoint any one soul living, that I have been so very particular already. As my life and opinions are likely to make some noise in the world, and, if I conjecture right, will take in all ranks, professions, and denominations of men whatever,—be no less read than the Pilgrim's Progress itself—and, in the end, prove the very thing which Montaigne dreaded his essays should turn out, that is, a book for a parlour window;——I find it necessary to consult every one a little in his turn; and therefore must beg pardon for going on a little further in the same way: For

which cause, right glad I am, that I have begun the history of myself in the way I have done; and that I am able to go on tracing every thing in it, as Horace says, *ab Ovo*.

Horace, I know, does not recommend this fashion altogether: But that gentleman is speaking only of an epic poem or a tragedy;—(I forget which)—besides, if it was not so, I should beg Mr. Horace's pardon;—for in writing what I have set about, I shall confine myself neither to his rules, nor to any man's rules that ever lived.

To such, however, as do not choose to go so far back into these things, I can give no better advice, than that they skip over the remaining part of this chapter; for I declare before-hand, 'tis wrote only for the curious and inquisitive.

———— Shut the door. ————— I was begot in the night, betwixt the first Sunday, and the first Monday in the month of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighteen. I am positive I was.—But how I came to be so very particular in my account of a thing which happened before I was born, is owing to another small anecdote known only in our own family, but now made public for the better clearing up this point.

My father, you must know, who was originally a Turkey merchant, but had left off business for some years, in order to retire to, and die upon his paternal estate in the county of ———, was, I believe, one of the most regular men in every thing he did, whether 'twas matter of business, or matter of amusement, that ever lived. As a small specimen of this extreme exactness of his to which he was in truth a
slave,

slave,——he had made it a rule for many years of his life,——on the first Sunday night of every month throughout the whole year,——as certain as ever the Sunday night came,——to wind up a large house-clock which he had standing upon the back-stairs head, with his own hands:——And being somewhere between fifty and sixty years of age, at the time I have been speaking of,——he had likewise gradually brought some other little family concerns to the same period, in order, as he would often say to my uncle Toby, to get them all out of the way at one time, and be no more plagued and pester'd with them the rest of the month.

It was attended but with one misfortune, which, in a great measure, fell upon myself, and the effects of which I fear I shall carry with me to my grave; namely that from an unhappy association of ideas which have no connection in nature, it so fell out at length, that my poor mother could never hear the said clock wound up,——but the thoughts of some other things unavoidably popp'd into her head,——& vice versa:——which strange combination of ideas, the sagacious Locke, who certainly understood the nature of these things better than most men, affirms to have produced more wry actions than all other sources of prejudice whatsoever.

But this by the bye.

Now it appears, by a memorandum in my father's pocket-book, which now lies upon the table, “That on Lady-day, which was on the 25th of the same month in which I date my geniture,——my father set out upon his journey to London with my eldest brother Bobby, to fix him at Westminster school;” and, as it appears from the

the same authority, "That he did not get down to his wife and family till the second week in May following" it brings the thing almost to a certainty. However, what follows in the beginning of the next chapter puts it beyond all possibility of doubt.

——But pray Sir, What was your father doing all December,—January, and February?

——Why, Madam,—he was all that time afflicted with a Sciatica.

CH A P. V.

ON the fifth day of November, 1718, which to the æra fixed on, was as near nine kalendar months as any husband could in reason have expected,—was I Tristram Shandy, Gentleman, brought forth into this scurvy and disastrous world of ours.——I wish I had been born in the Moon, or in any of the planets, (except Jupiter or Saturn, because I never could bear cold weather,) for it could not well have fared worse with me in any of them. (tho' I will not answer for Venus) than it has in this vile dirty planet of ours,——which o'my conscience, with reverence be it spoken, I take to be made up of the shreds and clippings of the rest;——not but the planet is well enough, provided a man could be born in it to a great title, or to a great estate; or could any how contrive to be called up to public charges, and employments of dignity and power;——but that is not my case:——and therefore every man will speak of the fair as his own market has gone in it;——for which cause I affirm it over again to be one of the vilest

left worlds that ever was made;—for I can truly say, that from the first hour I drew my breath in it, to this, that I can now scarce draw it at all, for an asthma I got in scating against the wind in Flanders;—I have been the continual sport of what the world calls Fortune; and tho' I will not wrong her by saying, She has ever made me feel the weight of any great and signal evil;—yet with all the good temper in the world, I affirm it of her, That in every stage of my life, and at every turn and corner where she could get fairly at me, the ungracious Duchess has pelted me with a set of as pitiful misadventures and cross accidents as ever small HERO sustained.

C H A P. VI.

IN the beginning of the last chapter I informed you exactly when I was born;—but I did not inform you how. No, that particular was reserved entirely for a chapter by itself;—besides, Sir, as you and I are in a manner perfect strangers to each other, it would not have been proper to have let you into too many circumstances relating to myself all at once.—— You must have a little patience. I have undertaken, you see, to write not only my life, but my opinions also; hoping and expecting that your knowledge of my character, and of what kind of a mortal I am, by the one, would give you a better relish for the other. As you proceed further with me, the slight acquaintance, which is now beginning betwixt us, will grow into familiarity; and that unless one of us is in fault, will

will terminate in friendship.——O diem præclarum!——then nothing which has touched me will be thought trifling in its nature, or tedious in its telling. Therefore, my dear friend and companion, if you should think me somewhat sparing of my narrative on my first setting out,—bear with me,——and let me go on, and tell my story my own way:——or if I should seem now and then to trifle upon the road, or should sometimes put on a fool's cap with a bell to it for a moment or two as we pass along,——don't fly off,——but rather courteously give me credit for a little more wisdom than appears on my outside;——and as we jogg on, either laugh with me, or at me, or in short do any thing,——only keep your temper.

C H A P. VII.

IN the same village where my father and mother dwelt, dwelt also a thin, upright, motherly, notable, good old body of a midwife, who with the help of a little plain good sense, and some years full employment in her business, in which she had all along trusted little to her own efforts, and a great deal to those of dame nature,——had acquired, in her way, no small degree of reputation in the world;——by which word world, need I in this place inform your worship, that I would be understood to mean no more of it, than a small circle described upon the circle of the great world of four English miles diameter, or thereabouts, of which the cottage where the good old woman lived, is supposed to be the centre.——She had been left,

it

it seems, a widow in great distress, with three or four small children, in her forty-seventh year; and as she was at that time a person of decent carriage,——grave deportment,——a woman moreover of few words, and withal an object of compassion, whose distress and silence under it call'd out the louder for a friendly list: the wife of the parson of the parish was touch'd with pity; and having often lamented an inconvenience, to which her husband's flock had for many years been expos'd, inasmuch, as there was no such thing as a midwife, of any kind or degree to be got at, let the case have been never so urgent, within less than six or seven long miles riding; which said seven long miles in dark nights and dismal roads, the country thereabouts being nothing but a deep clay, was almost equal to fourteen; and that in effect was sometimes next to having no midwife at all, it came into her head, that it would be doing as seasonable a kindness to the whole parish, as to the poor creature herself to get her a little instructed in some of the plain principles of the business, in order to set her up in it. As no woman thereabouts was better qualified to execute the plan she had formed than herself, the Gentlewoman very charitably undertook it; and having great influence over the female part of the parish, she found no difficulty in effecting it to the utmost of her wishes. In truth, the parson joined his interest with his wife's in the whole affair, and in order to do things as they should be, and give the poor soul as good a title by law to practise as his wife had given by institution,——he cheerfully paid the fees for the ordinary's licence himself, amounting in the whole, to the sum of
eighteen

eighteen shillings and four pence; so that betwixt them both, the good woman was fully invested in the real and corporal possession of her office, together with all its rights, members, and appurtenances whatsoever.

These last words, you must know, were not according to the old form in which such licences, faculties, and powers usually ran, which in like cases had heretofore been granted to the sisterhood. But it was according to a neat Formula of Didius his own devising, who having a particular turn for taking to pieces, and new framing over again, all kind of instruments in that way, not only hit upon this dainty amendment, but coax'd many of the old licensed matrons in the neighbourhood, to open their faculties afresh, in order to have this whim-wham of his inserted.

I own I never could envy Didius in these kinds of fancies of his:—But every man to his own taste.—Did not Dr. Kunastrokus, that great man, at his leisure hours, take the greatest delight imaginable in combing of asses tails, and plucking the dead hairs out with his teeth, tho' he had tweezers always in his pocket? Nay, if you come to that, Sir, have not the wisest men in all ages, not excepting Solomon himself, —have they not had their HOBBY-HORSES; —their running horses, —their coins and their cockle-shells, their drums and their trumpets, their fiddles, their pallets —their maggots and their butterflies? —and so long as a man rides his HOBBY-HORSE peaceably and quietly along the King's highway, and neither compels you or me to get up behind him, —

Pray,

Pray, Sir, what have either you or I to do with it?

—De gustibus non est disputandum;—

that is, there is no disputing against HOBBY-

HORSES; and, for my part, I seldom do; nor could I with any sort of grace, had I been an enemy to them at the bottom, for happening at cert a in intervals and changes of the Moon, to be both fiddler and painter, according as the fly stings:—Be it known to you, that I keep a couple of pads myself, upon which, in their turns, (nor do I care who knows it) I frequently ride out and take the air;—tho' sometimes to my shame be it spoken, I take somewhat longer journies than what a wise man would think altogether right. But the truth is—I am not a wise man;—and besides am a mortal of so little consequence in the world, it is not much matter what I do; so I seldom fret or fume at all about it: Nor does it much disturb my rest when I see such great Lords and tall Personages as hereafter follow;—such for instance, as my Lord A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, and so on, all of a row, mounted upon their several horses;—some with large stirrups, getting on in a more grave and sober pace;—others on the contrary, tuck'd up to their very chins with whips across their mouths, scouring and scampering it away like so many little party-colour'd devils astride a mortgage,—and as if some of them were resolyed to break their necks.—So much the

the better—say I to myself;—for in case the worst should happen, the world would make a shift to do excellently well without them;—and for the rest,—why,—God speed them,—e'en let them ride on without any opposition from me; for were their lordships unhorsed this very night——'tis ten to one but that many of them would be worse mounted by one half before to-morrow morning.

Not many of these instances therefore can be said to break in upon my rest.——But there is an instance, which I own puts me off my guard, and that is when I see one born for great actions, and what is still more for his honour, whose nature ever inclines him to good ones;——when I behold such a one, my Lord, like yourself, whose principles and conduct are as generous and noble as his blood, and whom for that reason a corrupt world cannot spare one moment;—when I see such a one, my Lord, mounted, though it is but for a minute beyond the time which my love to my country has prescribed to him, and my zeal for his glory wishes,—then, my Lord, I cease to be a philosopher, and in the first transport of an honest impatience, I wish the HOBBY-HORSE, with all his fraternity, at the Devil.

“ My Lord,

“ I Maintain this to be a dedication, notwithstanding its singularity in the three great
 “ essentials, of matter, form, and place: I beg,
 “ therefore, you will accept it as such, and that
 “ you will permit me to lay it with the most
 “ respectful

“ respectful humility, at your Lordship’s feet,
 “ ———when you are upon them,——— which
 “ you can be when you please;———and that
 “ is, my Lord, whenever there is occasion for
 “ it, and I will add, to the best purposes too.
 “ I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship’s most obedient,

and most devoted,

and most humble servant,

TRISTRAM SHANDY.

C H A P. IX.

I Solemnly declare to all mankind, that the above dedication was made for no one Prince, Prelate, Pope, or Potentate,—Duke, Marquis, Earl, Viscount, or Baron of this, or any other Realm in Christendom,———nor has it yet been hawk’d about, or offered publickly or privately, directly or indirectly, to any one person or personage, great or small; but is honestly a true Virgin-Dedication untried on, upon any soul living.

I labour this point so particularly, merely to remove any offence or objection which might arise against it, from the manner in which I propose to make the most of it;——which is the putting it up fairly to public sale; which I now do.

———Every author has a way of his own in bringing

bringing his points to bear ;—for my own part, as I hate chaffering and higgling for a few guineas in a dark entry ;——I resolved within myself, from the very beginning, to deal squarely and openly with your Great Folks in this affair, and try whether I should not come off the better by it.

If therefore there is any one Duke, Marquis, Earl, Viscount, or Baron, in these his Majesty's dominions, who stands in need of a tight, genteel dedication, and whom the above will suit, (for by the bye, unless it suits in some degree, I will not part with it)——it is much at his service for fifty guineas ;——which I am positive is twenty guineas less than it ought to be afforded for, by any man of genius.

My Lord, if you examine it over again, it is far from being a gross piece of daubing, as some dedications are. The design, your Lordship sees, is good, the colouring transparent,—the drawing not amiss ;—or to speak more like a man of science,—and measure my piece in the painter's scale, divided into 20,——I believe, my Lord, the out lines will turn out as 12,—the composition as 9,—the colouring as 6,—the expression 13 and a half,—and the design,——if I may be allowed, my Lord, to understand my own design, and supposing absolute perfection in designing, to be as 20,——I think it cannot well fall short of 19. Besides all this,——there is keeping in it, and the dark strokes in the HOB-BY-HORSE, (which is a secondary figure, and a kind of back-ground to the whole) give great force to the principal lights in your own figure, and make it come off wonderfully ;——and besides

besides there is an air of originality in the tout ensemble.

Be pleased, my good Lord, to order the sum to be paid into the hands of Mr. Doddsley, for the benefit of the author; and in the next edition care shall be taken that this chapter be expunged, and your Lordship's titles, distinctions, arms, and good actions, be placed at the front of the preceding chapter: All which from the words, *De gustibus non est disputandum*, and whatever else in this book relates to HOBBY-HORSES, but no more, shall stand dedicated to your Lordship—The rest I dedicate to the MOON, who, by the bye, of all the PATRONS or MATRONS I can think of, has most power to set my book a-going, and make the world run mad after it.

Bright Goddess,

If thou art not too busy with CANDID and Miss CUNEGUND's affairs,——take Tristram Shandy's under thy protection also!

CHAP. X.

Whatever degree of small merit, the act of benignity in favour of the midwife, might justly claim, or in whom that claim truly rested,——at first sight seems not very material to this history;——certain however it was that the gentlewoman, the parson's wife, did run away at that time with the whole of it: And yet, for my life I cannot help thinking but that the parson himself tho' he had not the good fortune to hit upon the design first,——

yet

yet as he heartily concurred in it the moment it was laid before him, and as heartily parted with his money to carry it into execution, had a claim to some share of it,—if not to a full half of whatever honour was due to it.

The world at that time was pleased to determine the matter otherwise.

Lay down the book, and I will allow you half a day to give a probable guess at the grounds of this procedure.

Be it known then, that for about five years before the date of the midwife's licence, of which you have had so circumstantial an account,——the parson we have to do with, had made himself a country talk, by a breach of all decorum, which he had committed against himself, his station, and his office;——and that was in never appearing better, or otherwise mounted, than upon a lean, sorry, jack-ass of an horse, value about one pound fifteen shillings; who, to shorten all description of him, was full brother to Rosinante, as far as similitude congenial could make him; for he answered his description to a hair-breadth in every thing,——except that I do not remember it is any where said, that Rosinante was broken-winded; and that, moreover, Rosinante, as is the happiness of most Spanish horses fat or lean,——was undoubtedly a horse at all points.

I know very well that the HERO's horse was a horse of chaste deportment, which may have given grounds for a contrary opinion: But it is certain at the same time, that Rosinante's continency (as may be demonstrated from the adventure of the Yanguessian carriers) proceeded from no bodily defect or cause whatsoever, but from
the

the temperance and orderly current of his blood, and let me tell you, Madam, there is a great deal of very good chastity in the world, in behalf of which you could not say more for your life.

Let that be as it may, as my purpose is to do exact justice to every creature brought upon the stage of this dramatic work, — I could not stifle this distinction in favour of Don Quixote's horse, — in all other points the parson's horse, I say, was just such another, — for he was as lean, and as lank, and as sorry a jade, as HUMILITY herself could have bestrided.

In the estimation of here and there a man of weak judgment, it was greatly in the parson's power to have helped the figure of this horse of his, for he was master of a very handsome demi-peak'd saddle, quilted on the seat with green plush, garnished with a double row of silver-headed studs, and a noble pair of shining brass stirrups, with a housings altogether suitable, of grey superfine cloth, with an edging of black lace, terminating in a deep, black, silk fringe; poudre d'or, — all which he had purchased in the pride and prime of his life, together with a grand embossed bridle, ornamented at all points as it should be. — But not caring to banter his beast, he had hang all these up behind his study door, — and, in lieu of them, had seriously be-fitted him with just such a bridle and such a saddle, as the figure and value of such a steed might well and truly deserve.

In the several sallies about his parish, and in the neighbouring visits to the gentry who lived around him, — you will easily comprehend, that the parson, so appointed, would both hear
and

and see enough to keep his philosophy from rusting. To speak the truth, he never could enter a village, but he caught the attention of both old and young——Labour stood still as he pass'd, the bucket hung suspended in the middle of the well,——the spinning wheel forgot its round,——even chuck-farthing and shuffie-cap themselves stood gaping till he had got out of sight; and as his movement was not of the quickest, he had generally time enough upon his hands to make his observations,——to hear the groans of the serious,——and the laughter of the light-hearted;——all which he bore with excellent tranquillity.——His character was,——he loved a jest in his heart——and as he saw himself in the true point of ridicule, he would say, he could not be angry with others for seeing him in a light, in which he so strongly saw himself: So that to his friends, who knew his foible was not the love of money, and who therefore made the less scruple in bantering the extravagance of his humour,——instead of giving the true cause,——he chose rather to join in the laugh against himself, and as he never carried one single ounce of flesh upon his own bones, being altogether as spare a figure as his beast,——he would sometimes insist upon it, that the horse was as good as the rider deserved,——that they were centaur-like,——both of a piece. At other times, and in other moods, when his spirits were above the temptation of false wit,——he would say, he found himself going off fast in a consumption; and, with great gravity would pretend, he could not bear the sight of a fat horse without a dejection of heart, and a sensible alteration in his pulse; and that

that he had made choice of the lean one he rode upon, not only to keep himself in countenance, but in spirits.

At different times he would give fifty humorous and opposite reasons for riding a meek-spirited jade of a broken winded horse, preferable to one of mettle;——for on such a one he could sit mechanically; and meditate as delightfully *de vanitate mundi et fuga saeculi*, as with the advantage of a death's head before him;——that, in all other exertations, he could spend his time, as he rode slowly along—to as much account as in his study;——that he could draw up an argument in his sermon,—or a hole in his breeches, as steadily on the one as in the other;——that brisk trotting and slow argumentation, like wit and judgment, were two incompatible movements.——But that, upon his steed——he could unite and reconcile every thing——he could compose his sermon,——he could compose his cough,——and, in case nature gave a call that way, he could likewise compose himself to sleep.——In short, the parson upon such encounters would assign any cause, but the true cause,—and he withheld the true one, only out of a nicety of temper, because he thought it did honour to him.

But the truth of the story was as follows: In the first years of this gentleman's life, and about the time when the superb saddle and bridle were purchased by him, it had been his manner, or vanity, or call it what you will,—to run into the opposite extreme.——In the language of the country where he dwelt, he was said to have loved a good horse, and generally had one of the best in the whole parish

standing in his stable always ready for saddling; and as the nearest midwife, as I told you, did not live nearer to the village than seven miles, and in a vile country,——it so fell out that the poor gentleman was scarce a whole week together without some piteous application for his beast; and as he was not an unkind-hearted man, and every case was more pressing and more distressful than the last,——as much as he loved his beast, he had never a heart to refuse him; the upshot of which was generally this, that his horse was either clapp'd, or spavin'd, or greaz'd—or he was twitter-bon'd, or broken-winded, or something, in short, or other had befallen him, which would let him carry no flesh; ——so that he had every nine or ten months a bad horse to get rid of,——and a good horse to purchase in his stead.

What the loss in such a balance might amount to communibus annis, I would leave to a special jury of sufferers in the same traffic to determine; ——but let it be what it would, the honest gentleman bore it for many years without a murmur, till at length by repeated ill accidents of the kind, he found it necessary to take the thing under consideration; and upon weighing the whole, and summing it up in his mind, he found it not only disproportioned to his other expences, but withal so heavy an article in itself, as to disable him from any other act of generosity in his parish: Besides this he considered, that, with half the sum thus galloped away, he could do ten times as much good;——and what still weighed more with him than all other considerations put together, was this, that it confined all his charity into one particular channel,

nel, and where, as he fancied, it was the least wanted, namely to the child-bearing and child-getting part of his parish; reserving nothing for the impotent,—nothing for the aged—nothing for the many comfortless scenes he was hourly called forth to visit, where poverty, and sickness, and affliction dwelt together.

For these reasons he resolved to discontinue the expence; and there appeared but two possible ways to extricate him clearly out of it;—and these were either to make it an irrevocable law never more to lend his steed upon any application whatever,—or else to be content to ride the last poor devil, such as they had made him, with all his aches and infirmities to the very end of the chapter.

As he dreaded his own constancy in the first,—he very chearfully betook himself to the second; and tho' he could very well have explained it, as I said, to his honour,—yet, for that very reason, he had a spirit above it; choosing rather to bear the contempt of his enemies, and the laughter of his friends, than undergo the pain of telling a story, which might seem a panegyric upon himself.

I have the highest idea of the spiritual and refined sentiments of this reverend gentleman, from this single stroke in his character, which I think comes up to any of the honest refinements of the peerless knight of la Mancha, whom, by the bye, with all his follies, I love more, and would actually have gone farther to have paid a visit to, than the greatest hero of antiquity.

But this is not the moral of my story: The thing I had in view was to shew the temper of the world in the whole of this affair.—For you

must know, that so long as this explanation would have done the parson credit—the devil a soul could find it out,—I suppose his enemies would not, and that his friends could not—— But no sooner did he bestir himself in behalf of the midwife, and pay the expences of the ordinary's licence to set her up,—but the whole secret came out; every horse he had lost, and two horses more than ever he had lost, with all the circumstances of their destruction, were known and distinctly remembered.—The story ran like wild-fire.——“ The parson had a returning
“ fit of pride which had just seized him, and
“ he was going to be well mounted once again
“ in his life; and if it was so, 'twas plain as
“ the sun at noon-day, he would pocket the
“ expence of the licence ten times told the very
“ first year:——so that every body was left
“ to judge what were his views in this act of
“ charity.”

What were his views in this, and in every other action of his life,—or rather what were the opinions which floated in the brains of other people concerning it was a thought which too much floated in his own, and too often broke in upon his rest, when he should have been sound asleep.

About ten years ago this gentleman had the good fortune to be made entirely easy upon that score,—it being just so long since he left his parish,—and the whole world at the same time behind him,—and stands accountable to a judge of whom he will have no cause to complain.

But there is a fatality attends the actions of some men: Order them as they will, they pass through a certain medium which so twists and refracts

refracts them from their true directions—— that, with all the titles to praise which a rectitude of heart can give, the doers of them are nevertheless forced to live and die without it.

Of the truth of which this gentleman was a painful example.——But to know by what means this came to pass,——and to make that knowledge of use to you, I insist upon it that you read the two following chapters, which contain such a sketch of his life and conversation, as will carry its moral along with it.—— When this is done, if nothing stops us in our way, we will go on with the midwife.

C H A P. XI.

YORICK was this parson's name, and, what is very remarkable in it, (as appears from a most antient account of the family wrote upon strong vellum, and now in perfect preservation) it had been exactly so spelt for near,—— I was within an ace of saying nine hundred years;——but I would not shake my credit in telling an improbable truth, however indisputable in itself;——and therefore I shall content myself with only saying,——It had been exactly so spelt, without the least variation or transposition of a single letter, for I do not know how long; which is more than I would venture to say of one half of the best surnames in the kingdom; which, in a course of years, have generally undergone as many chops and changes as their owners.——Has this been owing to the pride, or to the shame of their respective proprietors?——In honest truth, I think, sometimes to the

one, and sometimes to the other, just as the temptation has wrought. But a villainous affair it is, and will one day so blend and confound us all together, that no one shall be able to stand up and swear, "that his own great grand-father" "was the man who did either this or that."

This evil had been sufficiently fenced against by the prudent care of the Yorick family, and their religious preservation of these records I quote, which do further inform us, that the family was originally of Danish extraction, and had been transplanted into England as early as in the reign of Horwendillus, king of Denmark, in whose court it seems, an ancestor of this Mr. Yorick's, and from whom he was lineally descended, held a considerable post to the day of his death. Of what nature this considerable post was, this record saith not,—It only adds, That for near two centuries, it had been totally abolished as altogether unnecessary, not only in that court, but in every other court in the Christian world.

It has often come into my head, that this post could be no other than that of the king's chief Jester;—and that Hamlet's Yorick, in our Shakespear, many of whose plays, you know, are founded upon authenticated facts,—was certainly the very man.

I have not the time to look into Saxo-Grammaticus's Danish history, to know the certainty of this;—but if you have leisure, and can easily get at the book, you may do it full as well yourself.

I had just time in my travels through Denmark with Mr. Noddy's eldest son, whom in the year 1741, I accompanied as governor, riding along with

with him at a prodigious rate thro' most parts of Europe, and of which original journey perform'd by us two, a most delectable narrative will be given in the progress of this work. I had just time, I say, and that was all, to prove the truth of an observation made by a long sojourner in that country;—namely, “That nature was neither very lavish, nor was she very stingy in her gifts of genius and capacity to its inhabitants;—but, like a discreet parent, was moderately kind to them all; observing such an equal tenor in the distribution of her favours, as to bring them, in those points, pretty near to a level with each other; so that you will meet with few instances in that kingdom of refin'd parts; but a great deal of good plain household understanding amongst all ranks of people, of which every body has a share;” which is, I think, very right.

With us, you see, the case is quite different;—we are all ups and downs in this matter;—you are a great genius;—or 'tis fifty to one, Sir, you are a great dunce and a blockhead;—not that there is a total want of intermediate steps,—no,—we are not so irregular as that comes to;—but the two extremes are more common, and in a greater degree in this unsettled island, where nature in her gifts and dispositions of this kind, is most whimsical and capricious; fortune herself not being more so in the bequest of her goods and chattles than she.

This is all that ever stagger'd my faith in regard to Yorick's extraction, who, by what I can remember of him, and by all the accounts I could ever get of him, seem'd not to have had one single drop of Danish blood in his whole

crasis; in nine hundred years it might possibly have all run out:—I will not philosophize one moment with you about it; for happen how it would, the fact was this:—That instead of that cold phlegm and exact regularity of sense and humours, you would have look'd for, in one so extracted;—he was, on the contrary, as mercurial and sublimated a composition,—as heteroclite a creature in all his declensions—with as much life and whim, and gaite de cœur about him, as the kindest climate could have engendered and put together. With all this sail, poor Yorick carried not one ounce of ballast; he was utterly unpractised in the world; and at the age of twenty-six, knew just about as well how to steer his course in it, as a romping unsuspicious girl of thirteen: So that upon his first setting out, the brisk gale of his spirits, as you will imagine, ran him foul ten times in a day of some body's tackling; and as the grave and more slow paced were oftenest in his way;—you may likewise imagine, 'twas with such he generally had the ill luck to get the most entangled. For aught I know there might be some mixture of unlucky wit at the bottom of such Fracas—For, to speak the truth, Yorick had an invincible dislike and opposition in his nature to gravity;—not to gravity as such—for where gravity was wanted, he would be the most grave and serious of mortal men for days and weeks together;—but he was an enemy to the affectation of it, and declared open war against it, only as it appeared a cloak for ignorance, or for folly; and then, whenever it fell in his way however sheltered and protected, he seldom gave it much quarter.

Sometimes,

Sometimes, in his wild way of talking, he would say that gravity was an errant scoundrel; and he would add,—of the most dangerous kind too,—because a sly one; and that he verily believed, more honest, well-meaning people were bubbled out of their goods and money by it in one twelve-month, than by pocket-picking and shop-lifting in seven. In the naked temper which a merry heart discovered, he would say, There was no danger—but to itself:—whereas the very essence of gravity was design, and consequently deceit;—’twas a taught trick to gain credit of the world for more sense and knowledge than a man was worth; and that, with all its pretensions,—it was no better, but often worse than what a French wit had long ago defined it,—viz. A mysterious carriage of the body to cover the defects of the mind;—which definition of gravity, Yorick, with great imprudence, would say deserved to be wrote in letters of gold.

But, in plain truth, he was a man unhackneyed and unpractised in the world, and was altogether as indiscreet and foolish on every other subject of discourse where policy is wont to impress restraint. Yorick had no impression but one, and that was what arose from the nature of the deed spoken of; which impression he would usually translate into plain English without any periphrasis,—and too oft without much distinction of either personage, time, or place;—so that when mention was made of a pitiful or an ungenerous proceeding,—he never gave himself a moment’s time to reflect who was the Hero of the piece—what his station—or how far he had power to hurt him hereafter;—but if it was a dirty action,—without more ado,—

The man was a dirty fellow——and so on :——And as his comments had usually the ill fate to be terminated either in a bon mot, or to be enliven'd throughout with some drollery or humour of expression, it gave wings to Yorick's indiscretion. In a word, though he never fought, yet, at the same time, as he seldom shun'd occasions of saying what came uppermost, and without much ceremony,——he had but too many temptations in life, of scattering his wit and his humour,—his gibes and his jests about him.——They were not lost for want of gathering.

What were the consequences, and what was Yorick's catastrophe thereupon, you will read in the next chapter.

C H A P. XII.

THE Mortgager and the Mortgagee differ the one from the other, not more in length of purse, than the Jester and Jestee do in that of memory. But in this the comparison between them runs, as the scholiasts call it, upon all four; which, by the bye, is upon one or two legs more, than some of the best of Homer's can pretend to;—namely, That the one raises a sum and the other a laugh at your expence, and think no more about it. Interest, however, still runs on in both cases—the periodical or accidental payments of it, just serving to keep the memory of the affair alive; till, at length, in some evil hour—pop comes the creditor upon each, and by demanding principal upon the spot, together with full interest to the very day, makes them both feel the full extent of their obligations.

As the reader (for I hate your ifs) has a thorough knowledge of human nature, I need not say more to satisfy him, that my Hero could not go on at this rate without some slight experience of these incidental memento's. To speak the truth, he had wantonly involved himself in a multitude of small book-debts of this stamp, which notwithstanding Eugenius's frequent advice he too much disregarded; thinking that as not one of them was contracted thro' any malignancy;—but, on the contrary, from an honesty of mind, and a mere jocundity of humour, they would all of them be cross'd out in course.

Eugenius would never admit this; and would often tell him, that one day or other he would certainly be reckoned with; and he would often add in an accent of sorrowful apprehension—to the uttermost mite. To which Yorick, with his usual carelessness of heart, would as often answer with a pshaw!—and if the subject was started in the fields—with a hop, skip, and a jump, at the end of it; but if close pent up in the social chimney corner, where the culprit was barricado'd in, with a table and a couple of arm chairs, and could not so readily fly off in a tangent,—Eugenius would then go on with his lecture upon discretion, in words to this purpose, though somewhat better put together.

Trust me, dear Yorick, this unweary pleasantry of thine will sooner or later bring thee into serapes and difficulties, which no after-wit can extricate thee out of.——In these sallies, too oft, I see, it happens, that a person laugh'd at, considers himself in the light of a person injured, with all the rights of such a situation belonging to him; and when thou viewest him in

that

that light too, and reckonest up his friends, his family, his kindred, and allies,—and mustereſt up with them the many recruits which will liſt under him from a ſenſe of common danger; 'tis no extravagant arithmetic to ſay, that for every ten jokes,—thou haſt got an hundred enemies; and till thou haſt gone on, and raiſed a ſwarm of waſps about thy ears, and art half ſtung to death by them, thou wilt never be convinced it is ſo.

I cannot ſuſpect it in the man whom I eſteem, that there is the leaſt ſpur from ſpleen or malevolence of intent in theſe ſallies,—I believe and know them to be truly honeſt and ſportive:—but conſider, my dear lad, that fools cannot diſtinguiſh this, and that knaves will not; and thou knoweſt not what it is, either to provoke the one, or to make merry with the other,—whenever they aſſociate for mutual defence, depend upon it, they will carry on the war in ſuch a manner againſt thee, my dear friend, as to make thee heartily ſick of it, and of thy life too.

REVENGE from ſome baneful corner ſhall level a tale of diſhonour at thee, which no innocence of heart or integrity of conduct ſhall ſet right. —The fortunes of thy houſe ſhall totter, —thy character, which led the way to them, ſhall bleed on every ſide of it,—thy faith queſtioned,—thy works belied,—thy wit forgotten,—thy learning trampled on. To wind up the laſt ſcene of thy tragedy, CRUELTY and COWARDICE, twin ruſſians, hired and ſet on by MALICE in the dark, ſhall ſtrike together at all thy infirmities and miſtakes:—the beſt of us, my dear lad, lie open there,—and truſt me,—truſt me, Yorick, When, to gratify a private appetite, it is once reſolved upon, that an innocent and an
helpleſs

helpless creature shall be sacrificed, 'tis an easy matter to pick up sticks enow from any thicket where it has strayed, to make a fire to offer it up with.

Yorick scarce ever heard this sad vaticination of his destiny read over to him, but with a tear stealing from his eye, and a promissory look attending it, that he was resolved, for the time to come, to ride his tit with more sobriety.——But, alas, too late!—a grand confederacy, with***** and ***** at the head of it, was form'd before the first prediction of it.——The whole plan of the attack, just as Eugenius had forboded, was put in execution all at once,——with so little mercy on the side of the allies,——and so little suspicion in Yorick, of what was carrying on against him,——that when he thought, good easy man! full surely preferment was o'ripening,——they had smote his root, and then he fell, as many a worthy man had fallen before him.

Yorick, however, fought it out with all imaginable gallantry for some time; till, overpowr'd by numbers, and worn out at length by the calamities of the war,——but more so, by the ungenerous manner in which it was carried on,——he threw down the sword; and though he kept up his spirits in appearance to the last,——he died, nevertheless, as was generally thought, quite broken hearted.

What inclined Eugenius to the same opinion was as follows:

A few hours before Yorick breath'd his last, Eugenius stept in with an intent to take his last sight and last farewell of him: Upon his drawing Yorick's curtain, and asking how he felt himself, Yorick, looking up in his face, took hold
of

of his hand——and after thanking him for the many tokens of his friendship to him, for which he said, if it was their fate to meet hereafter,—he would thank him again and again.——He told him he was within a few hours of giving his enemies the slip for ever.——I hope not, answered Eugenius, with tears trickling down his cheeks, and with the tenderest tone that ever man spoke,—I hope not, Yorick, said he.——Yorick replied, with a look up, and a gentle squeeze of Eugenius's hand, and that was all,—but it cut Eugenius to his heart,——Come,—come, Yorick, quoth Eugenius, wiping his eyes and summoning up the man within him,—my dear lad, be comforted,—let not all thy spirits and fortitude forsake thee at this crisis when thou most wantest them;—who knows what resources are in store, and what the power of God may yet do for thee?—Yorick laid his hand upon his heart, and gently shook his head;—for my part continued Eugenius, crying bitterly as he uttered the words,—I declare I know not Yorick, how to part with thee,—and would gladly flatter my hopes, added Eugenius, cheering up his voice, that there is still enough left of thee to make a bishop,—and that I may live to see it.——I beseech thee, Eugenius, quoth Yorick, taking off his night-cap as well as he could with his left-hand,—his right being still grasped close in that of Eugenius,—I beseech thee to take a view of my head.——I see nothing that ails it, replied Eugenius. Then, alas! my friend, said Yorick, let me tell you, that 'tis so bruised and misshapen'd with the blows which ***** and ***** , and some others have so unhandsomely given me in the dark, that I might say with

Sancho

Sancho Pancha, that should I recover, and “Mistres thereupon he suffered to rain down from heaven as thick as hail, not one of ’m would fit it.”——Yorick’s last breath was hanging upon his trembling lips ready to depart as he utter’d this,—yet still it was utter’d with something of a cervantick tone;—and as he spoke it, Eugenius could perceive a stream of lambent fire lighted up for a moment in his eyes;—faint picture of those flashes of his spirit, which (as Shakespear said of his ancestor) were wont to set the table in a roar.

Eugenius was convinced from this, that the heart of his friend was broke; he squeez’d his hand,——and then walk’d softly out of the room, weeping as he walk’d. Yorick followed Eugenius with his eyes to the door,——he then clos’d them,——and never opened them more.

He lies buried in a corner of his church-yard, in the parish of——, under a plain marble slab, which his friend Eugenius, by leave of his executors, laid upon his grave, with no more than these three words of inscription serving both for his epitaph and elegy.

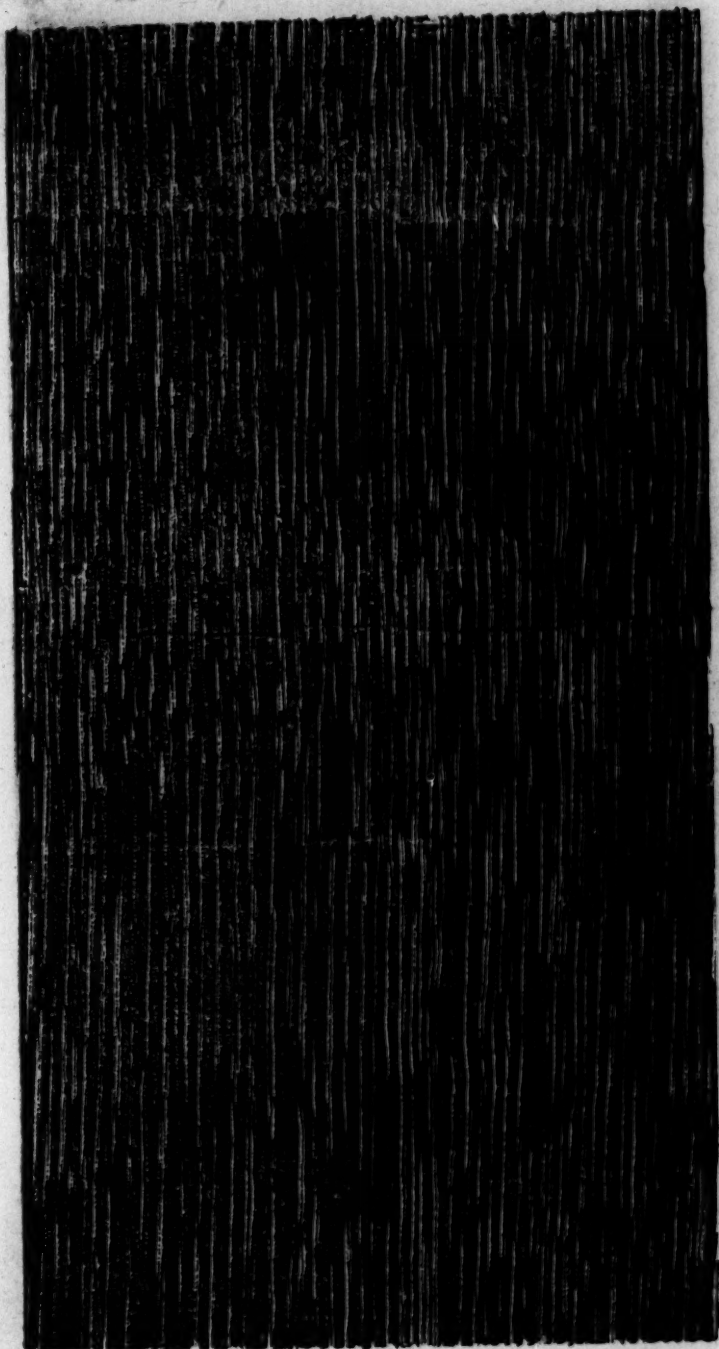
Alas, poor YORICK!

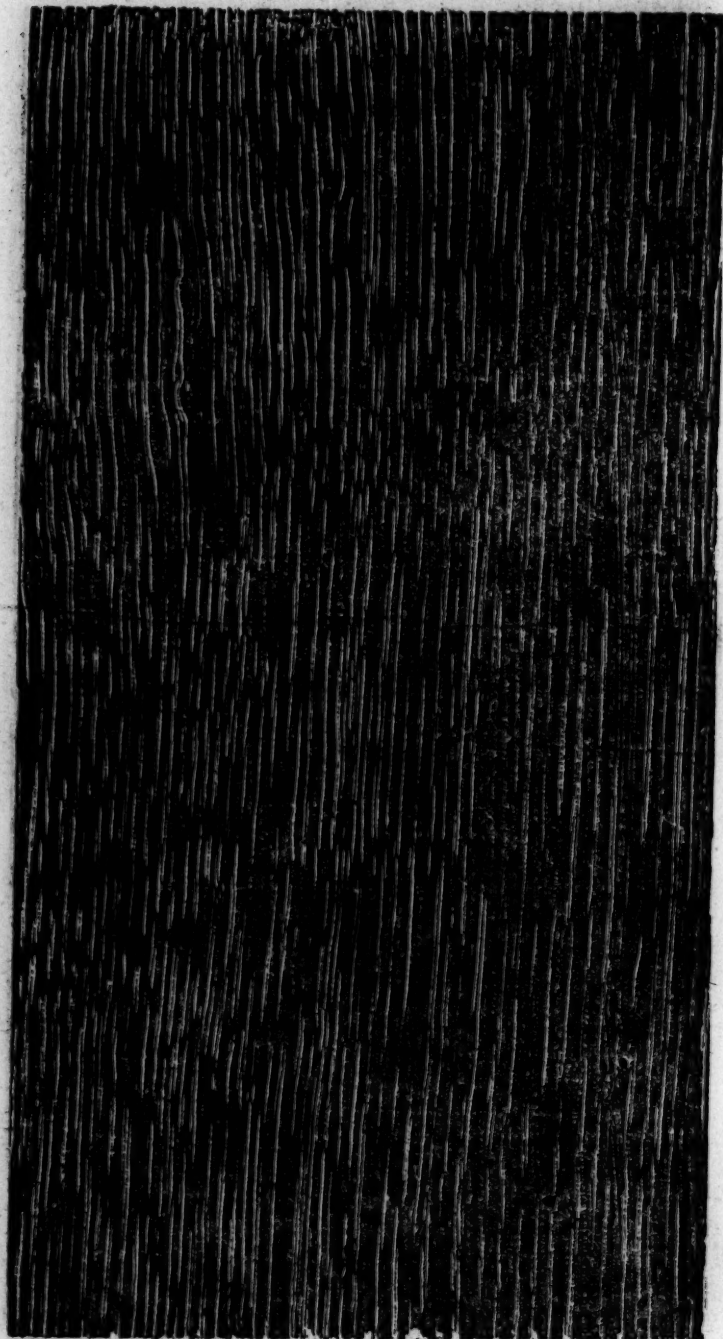
Ten times in a day has Yorick's ghost the consolation to hear his monumental inscription read over with such a variety of plaintive tones, as denote a general pity and esteem for him;—a foot-way crossing the church-yard close by the side of his grave,—not a passenger goes by without stopping to cast a look upon it,—and sighing as he walks on,

Alas, poor YORICK!

Alas, poor YORICK!

CHAP.





C H A P. XIII.

IT is so long since the reader of this rhapsodical work has been parted from the midwife, that it is high time to mention her again to him, merely to put him in mind that there is such a body still in the world, and whom, upon the best judgment I can form upon my own plan at present,—I am going to introduce to him for good and all: But as fresh matter may be started, and much unexpected business fall out betwixt the reader and myself which may require immediate dispatch:—’twas right to take care that the poor woman should not be lost in the mean time;—because when she is wanted we can no way do without her.

I think I told you that this good woman was a person of no small note and consequence throughout our whole village and township;—that her fame had spread itself to the very out-edge and circumference of that circle of importance, of which kind every soul living, whether he has a shirt to his back or no,—has one surrounding him;—which said circle, by the way, whenever ’tis said that such a one is of great weight and importance in the world, I desire may be enlarged or contracted in your worship’s fancy, in a compound-ratio of the station, profession, knowledge, abilities, height and depth (measuring both ways) of the personage brought before you.

In the present case, if I remember, I fixed it at about four or five miles, which not only comprehended the whole parish, but extended itself
to

to two or three of the adjacent hamlets in the skirts of the next parish; which made a considerable thing of it. I must add, That she was, moreover, very well looked on at one large grange-house and some other odd houses and farms within two or three miles, as I said, from the smoke of her own chimney:——But I must here, once for all, inform you, that all this will be more exactly delineated and explain'd in a map now in the hands of the engraver, which, with many other pieces and developements to this work will be added to the end of the twentieth volume, —not to swell the work,——I detest the thought of such a thing;——but by way of commentary, scholium, illustration, and key to such passages, incidents, or innuendoes as shall be thought to be either of private interpretation, or of dark or doubtful meaning after my life and my opinions shall have been read over, (now don't forget the meaning of the word) by all the world;——which betwixt you and me, and in spite of all the gentlemen reviewers in Great-Britain, and of all that their worships shall undertake to write or say to the contrary,—I am determined shall be the case.——I need not tell your worship, that all this is spoke in confidence.

C H A P. XIV.

UPON looking into my mother's marriage settlement, in order to satisfy myself and reader in a point necessary to be clear'd up, before we could proceed any further in this history; —I had the good fortune to pop upon the very thing I wanted before I had read a day and a half
straight

straight forwards,—it might have taken me up a month—which shews plainly, that when a man sits down to write a history,—tho' it be but the history of Jack Hickathrift or Tom Thumb, he knows no more than his heels what lets and confounded hinderances he is to meet with in his way,—or what a dance he may be led, by one excursion or another, before all is over. Could an historiographer drive on his history, as a muleteer drives on his mule——straight forward;——for instance, from Rome all the way to Loretto, without ever once turning his head aside either to the right hand or to the left,—he might venture to foretel you to an hour when he should get to his journey's end,——but the thing is, morally speaking, impossible: for if he is a man of the least spirit, he will have fifty deviations from a straight line to make with this or that party as he goes along, which he can no ways avoid. He will have views and prospects to himself perpetually solliciting his eye, which he can no more help standing still to look at than he can fly; he will moreover have various.

Accounts to reconcile:

Anecdotes to pick up:

Inscriptions to make out:

Stories to weave in:

Traditions to sift:

Personages to call upon:

Panegyricks to paste up at this door:

Pasquinades at that:——All which both the man and the mule are quite exempt from. To sum up all; there are archives at every stage to be look'd into, and rolls, records, documents, and endless genealogies, which justice ever and anon calls him back to stay the reading of:—In short,

short, there is no end of it—for my own part I declare I have been at it these six weeks, making all the speed I possibly could,—and am not yet born:—I have just been able, and that's all, to tell you when it happen'd, but not how;—so that you see the thing is yet far from being accomplished.

These unforeseen stoppages, which, I own I had no conception of when I first set out;—but which, I am convinced now, will rather encrease than diminish as I advance,—have struck out a hint which I am resolved to follow;—and that is,—not to be in a hurry;—but to go on leisurely, writing and publishing two volumes of my life every year,—which, if I am suffered to go on quietly, and can make a tolerable bargain with my bookseller, I shall continue to do as long as I live.

CH A P. XV.

THE article in my mother's marriage settlement, which I told the reader I was at the pains to search for, and which, now that I have found it, I think proper to lay before him,—is so much more fully express'd in the deed itself, than ever I can pretend to do it, that it would be barbarity to take it out of the lawyer's hand:—It is as follows.

“ AND THIS INDENTURE FURTHER WITNESSETH, That the said
 “ Walter Shandy, merchant, in consideration of
 “ the said intended marriage to be had, and by
 “ God's blessing to be well and truly solemnized and consummated between the said Wal-
 “ ter

“ ter Shandy and Elizabeth Mollineux, afore-
 “ said, and divers other good and valuable cau-
 “ ses and considerations him thereunto specially
 “ moving——doth grant, covenant, conde-
 “ scend, consent, conclude, bargain, and fully
 “ agree to and with John Dixon and James Tar-
 “ ner, Esqrs. the above-named trustees, &c.
 “ &c.——T O W I T,——That in case it
 “ should hereafter so fall out, chance, happen,
 “ or otherwise come to pass,——That the
 “ said Walter Shandy, merchant, shall have left
 “ off business before the time or times, that the
 “ said Elizabeth Mollineux shall, according to
 “ the course of nature, or otherwise, have left
 “ off bearing and bringing forth children ;——
 “ and that in consequence of the said Walter
 “ Shandy having so left off business, shall, in
 “ despight, and against the free will, consent,
 “ and good-liking of the said Elizabeth Molli-
 “ neux,——make a departure from the city
 “ of London, in order to retire to, and dwell up-
 “ on, his estate at Shandy-Hall, in the county
 “ of ——, or at any other country-seat,
 “ castle, hall, mansion-house, messuage, or
 “ grange-house, now purchased, or hereafter to
 “ be purchased, or upon any part or parcel there-
 “ of :—That then, and as often as the said Eliza-
 “ beth Mollineux shall happen to be enceint with
 “ child or children severally and lawfully begot,
 “ or to be begotten, upon the body of the said
 “ Elizabeth Mollineux during her said coverture,
 “ —he the said Walter Shandy shall, at his own
 “ proper cost and charges, and out of his own
 “ proper monies, upon good and reasonable no-
 “ tice, which is hereby agreed to be within fix
 “ weeks of her the said Elizabeth Mollineux’s
 “ full

“ full reckoning, or time of supposed and com-
“ puted delivery,—pay, or cause to be paid, the
“ sum of one hundred and twenty pounds of
“ good and lawful money, to John Dixon and
“ James Turner, Esqrs. or assigns,———
“ upon TRUST and confidence, and for and un-
“ to the use and uses, intent, end, and pur-
“ pose following:—THAT IS TO SAY,—
“ That the said sum of one hundred and twenty
“ pounds shall be paid into the hands of the said
“ Elizabeth Mollineux, or to be otherwise appli-
“ ed by them the said trustees, for the well and
“ truly hiring of one coach, with able and suffi-
“ cient horses, to carry and convey the body of
“ the said Elizabeth Mollineux and the child or
“ children which she shall be then and there en-
“ ceint and pregnant with,— unto the city of
“ London; and for the further paying and de-
“ fraying of all other incidental costs, charges,
“ and expences whatsoever,—in and about, and
“ for, and relating to her said intended delivery
“ and lying-in, in the said city or suburbs there-
“ of. And that the said Elizabeth Mollineux
“ shall and may from time to time, and at all
“ such time and times as are here covenanted and
“ agreed upon,—peaceably and quietly hire the
“ said coach and horses, and have free ingress,
“ egress and regress throughout her journey, in
“ and from the said coach, according to the te-
“ nor, true intent, and meaning of these pre-
“ sents, without any let, suit, trouble, disturb-
“ ance, molestation, discharge, hinderance,
“ forfeiture, eviction, vexation, interruption,
“ or incumberance whatsoever.———And
“ that it shall moreover be lawful to and for the
“ said Elizabeth Mollineux, from time to time,
“ and

“ and as oft or often as she shall well and truly
 “ be advanced in her said pregnancy, to the
 “ time heretofore stipulated and agreed upon,—
 “ to live and reside in such place or places, and
 “ in such family or families, and with such re-
 “ lations, friends, and other persons within the
 “ said city of London, as she, at her own will
 “ and pleasure, notwithstanding her present co-
 “ verture, and as if she was a femme sole and
 “ unmarried,——shall think fit.———AND
 “ THIS INDENTURE FURTHER WIT-
 “ NESSETH, That for the more effectually
 “ carrying of the said covenant into execution,
 “ the said Walter Shandy, merchant, doth here-
 “ by grant, bargain, sell, release, and confirm
 “ unto the said John Dixon and James Turner,
 “ Esqrs. their heirs, executors, and assigns, in
 “ their actual possession, now being by virtue of
 “ an indenture of bargain and sale for a year to
 “ them the said John Dixon and James Turner,
 “ Esqrs. by him the said Walter Shandy, mer-
 “ chant, thereof made; which said bargain and
 “ sale for a year, bears date the day next before
 “ the date of these presents, and by force and
 “ virtue of the statute for transferring of uses in-
 “ to possession,——ALL that the mannor and
 “ lordship of Shandy, in the county of ——,
 “ with all the rights, members, and appurte-
 “ nances thereof; and all and every the mes-
 “ suages, houses, buildings, barns, stables, or-
 “ chards, gardens, backfides, tofts, crofts,
 “ garths, cottages, lands, meadows, feedings,
 “ pastures, marshes, commons, woods, under-
 “ woods, drains, fisheries, waters and water-
 “ courses,———together with all rents,
 “ reversions, services, annuities, fee-farms,
 Vol. I. C “ knight’s

“ knights fees, views of frank-pledge, escheats,
 “ reliefs, mines, quarries, goods and chattels
 “ of felons and fugitives, felons of themselves,
 “ and put in exigent, deodands, free warrens,
 “ and all other royalties and seignories, rights,
 “ and jurisdictions, privileges and hereditaments
 “ whatsoever.———AND ALSO the ad-
 “ vowson, donation, presentation and free dis-
 “ position of the rectory or parsonage of Shandy
 “ aforesaid, and all and every the tenths, tythes,
 “ glebe-lands”———In three words———
 “ My mother was to lie in, (if she chose it) in
 “ London.”

But in order to put a stop to the practice of any
 unfair play on the part of my mother, which a
 marriage article of this nature too manifestly
 opened a door to, and which indeed had never
 been thought of at all, but for my uncle Toby
 Shandy;—a clause was added in security of my
 father, which was this:——“ That in case my
 “ mother hereafter should, at any time, put my
 “ father to the trouble and expence of a London
 “ journey upon false cries and tokens;——that
 “ for every such instance she should forfeit all the
 “ right and title which the covenant gave her to
 “ the next turn;—but to no more,—and so on,
 “ toties quoties, in as effectual a manner, as if
 “ such a covenant betwixt them had not been
 “ made.”——This by the way, was no more than
 what was reasonable;—and yet, as reasonable as
 it was, I have ever thought it hard that the whole
 weight of the article should have fallen entirely,
 as it did, upon myself.

But I was begot and born to misfortunes;—
 for my poor mother, whether it was wind or wa-
 ter,—or a compound of both,—or neither;——

or whether it was simply the mere swell of imagination and fancy in her;—or how far a strong wish and desire to have it so, might mislead her judgment;—in short whether she was deceived or deceiving in this matter, it no way becomes me to decide. The fact was this, that in the latter end of September, 1717, which was the year before I was born, my mother having carried my father up to town much against the grain, —he peremptorily insisted upon the clause;—so that I was doom'd, by marriage articles, to have my nose squeez'd as flat to my face, as if the destinies had actually spun me without one.

How this event came about,—and what a train of vexatious disappointments, in one stage or other of my life, have pursued me from the mere loss, or rather compression of this one single member,—shall be laid before the reader all in due time.

C H A P. XVI.

MY father, as any body may naturally imagine, came down with my mother into the country, in but a pettish kind of a humour. The first twenty or five-and-twenty miles he did nothing in the world but fret and teaze himself, and indeed my mother too, about the cursed expence, which he said might every shilling of it have been saved;—then what vexed him more than every thing else, was the provoking time of the year,—which, as I told you, was towards the end of September, when his wall-fruit, and green gages especially, in which he was very curious, were just ready for pulling:—“Had

“ he been whistled up to London, upon a Tom
“ Fool’s errand in any other month of the whole
“ year, he should not have said three words a-
“ bout it.”

For the next two whole stages, no subject would go down, but the heavy blow he had sustained from the loss of a son, whom it seems he had fully reckoned upon in his mind, and registered down in his pocket-book; as a second staff for his old age, in case Bobby should fail him. “ The disappointment of this, he said, was ten
“ times more to a wise man than all the money
“ which the journey, &c. had cost him, put
“ together,—not the hundred and twenty
“ pounds,—he did not mind it a rush.”

From Stilton all the way to Grantham, nothing in the whole affair provoked him so much as the condolences of his friends, and the foolish figure they should both make at church the first Sunday;—of which, in the satirical vehemence of his wit, now sharpened a little by vexation, he would give so many humorous and provoking descriptions,—and place his rib and self in so many tormenting lights and attitudes in the face of the whole congregation;—that my mother declared these two stages were so truly tragi-comical, that she did nothing but laugh and cry in a breath, from one end to the other of them all the way.

From Grantham, till they had crossed the Trent, my father was out of all kind of patience at the vile trick and imposition which he fancied my mother had put upon him in this affair—
“ Certainly,” he would say to himself, over and over again, “ the woman could not be deceived herself;—if she could,—what weakness!”

“ nefs ! ”—tormenting word ! which led his imagination a thorny dance, and, before all was over, played the duce and all with him ;—for sure as ever the word weakness was uttered and struck full upon his brain,—so sure it set him upon running divisions upon how many kinds of weaknesses there were ;—that there was such a thing as weakness of the body,—as well as weakness of the mind,—and then he would do nothing but syllogize within himself for a stage or two together, how far the cause of all these vexations might, or might not, have arisen out of himself.

In short, he had so many little subjects of disquietude springing out of this one affair, all fretting successively in his mind as they rose up in it, that my mother, whatever was her journey up, had but an uneasy journey of it down—In a word, as she complained to my uncle Toby, he would have tired out the patience of any flesh alive.

C H A P. XVII.

THOUGH my father travelled homewards as I told you, in none of the best of moods,—pshaw-ing and pish-ing all the way down,—yet he had the complaisance to keep the worst part of the story still to himself ;—which was the resolution he had taken of doing himself the justice, which my uncle Toby’s clause in the marriage settlement empowered him ; nor was it till the very night in which I was begot, which was thirteen months after, that she had the least intimation of his design——when my father,

happening, as you remember, to be a little chagrined and out of temper,—took occasion as they lay chatting gravely in bed afterwards, talking over what was to come,—to let her know that she must accommodate herself as well as she could to the bargain made between them in their marriage deeds; which was to lye-in of her next child in the country; to balance the last year's journey.

My father was a gentleman of many virtues, ---but he had a strong spice of that in his temper which might, or might not add to the number. ———'Tis known by the name of perseverance in a good cause, and of obstinacy in a bad one: Of this my mother had so much knowledge, that she knew 'twas to no purpose to make any remonstrance,—so she e'en resolved to sit down quietly, and make the most of it.

C H A P. XVIII.

AS the point was that night agreed, or rather determined, that my mother should lye-in of me in the country, she took her measures accordingly; for which purpose, when she was three days, or thereabouts, gone with child, she began to cast her eyes upon the midwife whom you have so often heard me mention; and before the week was well got round, as the famous Dr. Maningham was not to be had, she had come to a final determination in her mind,—notwithstanding there was a scientifick operator within so near a call as eight miles of us, and who moreover, had expressly wrote a five shillings book upon the subject of midwifery, in which he had exposed,

exposed, not only the blunders of the sisterhood itself,—but had also superadded many curious improvements for the quicker extraction of the fœtus in cross births; and some other cases of danger which delay us in getting into the world; notwithstanding all this, my mother, I say, was absolutely determined to trust her life and mine with it, into no soul's hand but this old woman's only.—Now this I like;—when we cannot get at the very thing we wish,—never to take up with the next best in degree to it;—no, that's pitiful beyond description;—it is no more than a week from this very day, in which I am now writing this book for the edification of the world,—which is March 9, 1759,—that my dear, dear Jenny observing I looked a little grave, as she stood cheapening a silk of five and twenty shillings a yard,—told the mercer, she was sorry she had given him so much trouble;—and immediately went and bought herself a yard-wide stuff of ten-pence a yard.—'Tis the duplication of one and the same greatness of soul; only what lessened the honour of it somewhat, in my mother's case, was, that she could not heroine it into so violent and hazardous an extreme, as one in her situation might have wished; because the old midwife had really some little claim to be depended upon,—as much, at least, as success could give her; having, in the course of her practice of near twenty years in the parish, brought every mother's son of them into the world without any one slip or accident which could fairly be laid to her account.

These facts, tho' they had their weight, yet did not altogether satisfy some few scruples and uneasinesses which hung upon my father's spirits

in relation to this choice. To say nothing of the natural workings of humanity and justice, or of the yearnings of parental and connubial love, all which prompted him, to leave as little to hazard as possible in a case of this kind!—he felt himself concerned in a particular manner, that all should go right in the present case;—from the accumulated sorrow he lay open to should any evil betide his wife and child in lying-in at Shandy-hall.—He knew the world judged by events, and would add to his afflictions in such a misfortune, by loading him with the whole blame of it.—“Alas o’day!—had Mrs. Shandy, poor gentlewoman! had but her wish in going up to town just to lye-in and come down again; —which, they say, she begged and prayed for upon her bare knees,—and which, in my opinion, considering the fortune which Mr. Shandy got with her,——was no such mighty matter to have complied with, the lady and her babe might both of ’em have been alive at this hour.”

This exclamation my father knew was unanswerable;—and yet, it was not merely to shelter himself,—nor was it altogether for care of his offspring and wife that he seemed so extremely anxious about this point;—my father had extensive views of things,—and stood, moreover, as he thought, deeply concerned in it for the publick good, from the dread he entertained of the bad uses an ill-fated instance might be put to.

He was very sensible that all political writers upon the subject had unanimously agreed and lamented, from the beginning of Queen Elizabeth’s reign down to his own time, that the current of men and money towards the metropolis upon

upon one frivolous errand or another,—set in so strong;—as to become dangerous to our civil rights;—tho', by the bye,—a current was not the image he took most delight in,—a distemper was here his favourite metaphor, and he would run it down into a perfect allegory, by maintaining it was identically the same in the body national as in the body natural, where blood and spirits were driven up into the head faster than they could find their ways down,—a stoppage of circulation must ensue, which was death in both cases.

There was little danger, he would say, of losing our liberties by French politicks or French invasions;—nor was he so much in pain of a consumption from the mass of corrupted matter and ulcerated humours in our constitution,—which he hoped was not so bad as it was imagined;—but he verily feared, that in some violent push, we should go off, all at once, in a state apoplexy—and then he would say, The Lord have mercy upon us all.

My father was never able to give the history of this distemper,—without the remedy along with it.

“Was I an absolute prince,” he would say, pulling up his breeches, with both his hands, as he rose from his arm chair, “I would appoint
“able judges, at every avenue of my metropo-
“lis, who should take cognizance of every
“fool’s business who came there; and if, upon
“a fair and candid hearing, it appeared not of
“weight sufficient to leave his own home, and
“come up, bag and baggage, with his wife and
“children, farmers sons, &c. &c. at his back-
“side, they should be all sent back from consta-

“ ble to constable, like vagrants as they were,
“ to the place of their legal settlements. By
“ this means, I shall take care, that my metro-
“ polis tottered not thro’ its own weight,—that
“ the head be no longer too big for the body ;
“ —that the extremes, now wasted and pin-
“ ned in, be restored to their due share of nou-
“ rishment, and regain, with it, their natural
“ strength and beauty:—I would effectually
“ provide, That the meadows and corn fields,
“ of my dominions, should laugh and sing ;—
“ that good chear and hospitality flourish once
“ more ;—and that such weight and influence be
“ put thereby into the hands of the Squirality
“ of my kingdom, as should counterpoise what
“ I perceive my Nobility are now taking from
“ them.

“ Why are there so few palaces and gentle-
“ men’s seats,” he would ask, with some emo-
“ tion, as he walked across the room, “ through-
“ out so many delicious provinces in France ?
“ Whence is it that the few remaining Chateaus
“ amongst them are so dismantled,—so unfur-
“ nished, and in so ruinous and desolate a con-
“ dition ?—Because, Sir, (he would say) in that
“ kingdom no man has any country interest to
“ support ;—the little interest of any kind, which
“ any man has any where in it, is concentrated
“ in the court, and the looks of the Grand
“ Monarch ; by the sun-shine of whose coun-
“ tenance, or the clouds which pass across it,
“ every French man lives or dies.”

Another political reason which prompted my
father so strongly to guard against the least evil
accident in my mother’s lying-in in the country,
—was, That any such instance would infallibly
throw

throw a balance of power, too great already, into the weaker vessels of the gentry, in his own, or higher stations;—which, with the many other usurped rights which that part of the constitution was hourly establishing,——would, in the end, prove fatal to the monarchical system of domestic government established in the first creation of things by God.

In this point he was entirely of Sir Robert Filmer's opinion. That the plans and institutions of the greatest monarchies in the eastern parts of the world, were originally, all stolen from that admirable pattern and prototype of this household and paternal power;—which, for a century, he said, and more, had gradually been degenerating away into a mixed government;—the form of which, however desirable in great combinations of the species,——was very troublesome in small ones,——and seldom produced any thing, that he saw, but sorrow and confusion.

For all these reasons, private and publick, put together,——my father was for having the man-midwife by all means,——my mother by no means. My father begged and intreated, she would for once recede from her prerogative in this matter, and suffer him to choose for her;—my mother, on the contrary, insisted upon her privilege in this matter, to choose for herself,——and have no mortal's help but the old woman's.—What could my father do? He was almost at his wit's end;—talked it over with her in all moods;—placed his arguments in all lights;—argued the matter with her like a christian,——like a heathen,——like a husband,——like a father,——like a patriot,——like a man:——My mother answered every thing only like a woman; which was a little hard.

hard upon her;—for as she could not assume and fight it out behind such a variety of characters, —'twas no fair match; —'twas seven to one. — What could my mother do? — She had the advantage (otherwise she had been certainly overpowered) of a small reinforcement of chagrine personal at the bottom which bore her up, and enabled her to dispute the affair with my father with so equal an advantage, — that both sides sung *Te Deum*. In a word, my mother was to have the old woman, — and the operator was to have licence to drink a bottle of wine with my father and my uncle Toby Shandy in the back parlour, — for which he was to be paid five guineas.

I must beg leave, before I finish this chapter, to enter a caveat in the breast of my fair reader: — and it is this: — Not to take it absolutely for granted from an unguarded word or two which I have dropped in it, — “That I am a married man.” — I own the tender appellation of my dear, dear Jenny, — with some other strokes of conjugal knowledge, interspersed here and there, might naturally enough, have misled the most candid judge in the world into such a determination against me. — All I plead for in this case, Madam, is strict justice, and that you do so much of it, to me as well as to yourself, — as not to prejudge or receive such an impression of me, till you have better evidence, than I am positive, at present, can be produced against me: — Not that I can be so vain or unreasonable, Madam, as to desire you should therefore think, that my dear, dear Jenny is my kept mistress, — no, — that would be flattering my character in the other extreme,

treme, and giving it an air of freedom, which, perhaps, it has no kind of right to. All I contend for, is the utter impossibility for some volumes, that you, or the most penetrating spirit upon earth, should know how this matter really stands. — It is not impossible, but that my dear, dear Jenny! tender as the appellation is, may be my child, — Consider, — I was born in the year eighteen. — Nor is there any thing unnatural or extravagant in the supposition, that my dear Jenny may be my friend. — Friend! — My friend. — Surely, Madam, a friendship between the two sexes may subsist, and be supported without — Fy! Mr. Shandy: — Without any thing, Madam, but that tender and delicious sentiment, which ever mixes in friendship where there is a difference of sex. Let me entreat you to study the pure and sentimental parts of the best French Romances; — it will really, Madam, astonish you to see with what a variety of chaste expression this delicious sentiment, which I have the honour to speak of, is dressed out.

C H A P. XIX.

I Would sooner undertake to explain the hardest problem in Geometry, than pretend to account for it, that a gentleman of my father's great good sense, — knowing, as the reader must have observed him, and curious too, in philosophy, — wise also in political reasoning, — and in polemical (as he will find) no way ignorant, — could be capable of entertaining a notion in his head, so out of the common track, — that I fear the reader, when I come to mention

tion it to him, if he is the least of a cholerick temper, will immediately throw the book by; if mercurial, he will laugh most heartily at it; —and if he is of a grave and saturnine cast, he will, at first sight, absolutely condemn as fanciful and extravagant; and that was in respect to the choice and imposition of Christian names, on which he thought a great deal more depended than what superficial minds were capable of conceiving.

His opinion, in this matter, was, That there was a strange kind of magick bias, which good or bad names, as he called them, irresistibly impressed upon our characters and conduct.

The Hero of Cervantes argued not the point with more seriousness, — nor had he more faith, — or more to say on the power of Necromancy in dishonouring his deeds, — or on DULCINEA's name, in shedding lustre upon them, than my father had on those of TRISMEGISTUS or ARCHIMEDES, on the one hand — or of NYKY and SIMKIN on the other. How many CÆSARS and POMPEYS, he would say, by mere inspiration of the names, have been rendered worthy of them? And how many, he would add, are there who might have done exceeding well in the world, had not their characters and spirits been totally depressed and NICODEMUS'D into nothing.

I see plainly, Sir, by your looks, (or as the case happened) my father would say, — that you do not heartily subscribe to this opinion of mine, — which to those, he would add, who have not carefully sifted it to the bottom, — I own has an air more of fancy than of solid reasoning in it; — and yet, my dear Sir, if I may

may presume to know your character, I am morally assured, I should hazard little in stating a case to you—not as a party in the dispute,—but as a judge, and trusting my appeal upon it to your own good sense and candid disquisition in this matter ;——— you are a person free from as many narrow prejudices of education as most men ;——and, if I may presume to penetrate further into you,—of a liberality of genius above bearing down an opinion, merely because it wants friends. Your son!—your dear son,—from whose sweet and open temper you have so much to expect,—Your BILLY, Sir?——— would you for the world have called him JUDAS?——Would you, my dear Sir, he would say, laying his hand upon your breast, with the genteelest address,—and in that soft and irresistible piano of voice, which the nature of the argumentum ad hominem absolutely requires,—Would you, Sir, if a Jew of a godfather had proposed the name of your child, and offered you his purse along with it, would you have consented to such a defecration of him?——O my God! he would say, looking up if I know your temper right, Sir,—you are incapable of it ;——you would have trampled upon the offer ;——— you would have thrown the temptation at the tempter's head with abhorrence.

Your greatness of mind in this action, which I admire, with that generous contempt of money which you shew me in the whole transaction, is really noble ;———and what renders it more so, is the principle of it ;——the workings of a parent's love upon the truth and conviction of this very hypothesis, namely, That was your son called JUDAS,—the sordid and treacherous
idea

idea, so inseparable from the name, would have accompanied him thro' life like his shadow, and in the end, made a miser and a rascal of him, in spite, Sir, of your example.

I never knew a man able to answer this argument——But, indeed, to speak of my father as he was; he was certainly irresistible, both in his orations and disputations; he was born an orator;——*Οροδιδάκτωρ*.——Persuasion hung upon his lips, and the elements of Logick and Rhetorick were so blended up in him,——and, withal, he had so shrewd a guess at the weaknesses and passions of his respondent,——that NATURE might have stood up and said,——“This man is eloquent.” In short, whether he was on the weak or the strong side of the question, 'twas hazardous in either case to attack him:—And yet, 'tis strange, he had never read Cicero nor Quintilian de Oratore, nor Isocrates, nor Aristotle, nor Longinus amongst the ancients;——nor Vossius, nor Skioppius, nor Ramus, nor Farnaby amongst the moderns;——and what is more astonishing, he had never in his whole life the least light or spark of subtilty struck into his mind, by one single lecture upon Crackenthorp or Burgersdicius, or any Dutch logician or commentator;—he knew not so much as in what the difference of an argument ad ignorantiam, and an argument ad hominem consisted; so that I well remember, when he went up along with me to enter my name at Jesus College in ****,——it was a matter of just wonder with my worthy tutor, and two or three fellows of that learned society, that a man who knew not so much as the names of his tools, should be able to work after that fashion with 'em.

To work with them in the best manner he could, was what my father was, however, perpetually forced upon ;——for he had a thousand little sceptical notions of the comick kind to defend,——most of which notions, I verily believe at first entered upon the footing of mere whims, and of a *vive la Bagatelle* ; and as such he would make merry with them for half an hour or so, and having sharpened his wit upon 'em, dismiss them, till another day.

I mention this, not only as matter of hypothesis or conjecture upon the progress and establishment of my father's many odd opinions, but as a warning to the learned reader against the indiscreet reception of such guests, who, after a free and undisturbed entrance for some years, into our brains, at length claim a kind of settlement there,——working sometimes like yeast ;——but more generally after the manner of the gentle passion, beginning in jest,——but ending in downright earnest.

Whether this was the case of the singularity of my father's notions, or that his judgment, at length, became the dupe of his wit ; or how far, in many of his notions, he might, though odd, be absolutely right ;——the reader, as he comes at them, shall decide. All that I maintain here, is, that in this one, of the influence of Christian names, however it gained footing, he was serious ;——he was all uniformity ;——he was systematical, and like all systematick reasoners, he would move both heaven and earth, and twist and torture every thing in nature to support his hypothesis. In a word, I repeat it over again ;——he was serious ;——and, in consequence of it, he would lose all kind

kind of patience whenever he saw people, especially of condition, who should have known better,——as careless and as indifferent about the name they imposed upon their child, or more so, than in the choice of Ponto or Cupid for their puppy dog.

This, he would say, looked ill;——and had, moreover, this particular aggravation, in it, viz. That when once a vile name was wrongfully or injudiciously given, 'twas not like the case of a man's character, which, when wronged, might hereafter be cleared;——and, possibly, some time or other, if not in the man's life, at least after his death, be, somehow or other, set to rights with the world: But the injury of this, he would say, could never be undone;—nay, he doubted even whether an act of parliament could reach it:——He knew as well as you, that the legislature assumed a power over surnames;——but for very strong reasons, which he could give, it had never yet ventured, he would say, to go a step further.

It was observable, that though my father, in consequence of this opinion, had, as I have told you, the strongest likings and dislikings towards certain names;—that there were still numbers of names which hung so equally in the balance before him, that they were absolutely indifferent to him, Jack, Dick and Tom were of this class: These my father called neutral names;—affirming of them, without a satyr, That there had been as many knaves and fools, at least, as wise and good men, since the world began, who had indifferently borne them;——so that, like equal forces acting against each other in contrary directions, he thought they mutually destroyed each
others

others effects; for which reason, he would often declare, He would not give a cherry-stone to choose amongst them. Bob, which was my brother's name, was another of these neutral kinds of Christian names, which operated very little either way; and as my father happened to be at Epsom, when it was given him, he would oft times thank heaven it was no worse. Andrew was something like a negative quantity in Algebra with him;—'twas worse, he said, than nothing.—William stood pretty high:—Numps again was low with him—and Nick he said, was the DEVIL.

But, of all the names in the universe, he had the most unconquerable aversion for TRISTRAM;—he had the lowest and most contemptible opinion of it of any thing in the world, thinking it could possibly produce nothing in rerum natura, but what was extremely mean and pitiful: So that in the midst of a dispute on the subject, in which, by the bye, he was frequently involved, —he would sometimes break off in a sudden and spirited EPIPHONEMA, or rather EROTESIS, raised a third, and sometimes a full fifth, above the key of the discourse,——and demand it categorically of his antagonist, Whether he would take upon him to say, he had ever remembered, —whether he had ever read,—or even whether he had ever heard tell of a man, call'd Tristram, performing any thing great or worth recording? —No,——he would say,——TRISTRAM!—The thing is impossible.

What could be wanting in my father but to have wrote a book to publish this notion of his to the world? Little boots it to the subtle speculatist to stand single in his opinions,——un-
less

less he gives them proper vent:—It was the identical thing which my father did;—for in the year sixteen, which was two years before I was born, he was at the pains of writing an express DISSERTATION simply upon the word Tristram, —shewing the world, with great candour and modesty, the grounds of his great abhorrence to the name.

When this story is compared with the title-page,——Will not the gentle reader pity my father from his soul?——to see an orderly and well-disposed gentleman, who tho' singular,——yet inoffensive in his notions,——so played upon in them by cross purposes;——to look down upon the stage, and see him baffled and overthrown in all his little systems and wishes; to behold a train of events perpetually falling out against him, and in so critical and cruel a way, as if they had purposedly been planned and pointed out against him, merely to insult his speculations.——In a word, to behold such a one, in his old age, ill-fitted for troubles, ten times in a day suffering sorrow;—ten times in a day calling the child of his prayers TRISTRAM! ——Melancholy dissyllable of sound! which, to his ears, was unison to Nicompoop, and every name vituperative under heaven.——By his ashes! I swear it,—if ever malignant spirit took pleasure, or busied itself in traversing the purposes of mortal man,—it must have been here;—and if it was not necessary I should be born before I was christened, I would this moment give the reader an account of it.

C H A P. XX.

—————How could you, Madam, be so inattentive in reading the last chapter? I told you in it, That my mother was not a papist.—Papist! You told me no such thing, Sir. Madam, I beg leave to repeat it over again, That I told you as plain, at least, as words, by direct inference, could tell you such a thing.—Then, Sir, I must have missed a page.—No, Madam,—you have not missed a word.—Then, I was asleep, Sir.—My pride, Madam, cannot allow you that refuge.—Then, I declare, I know nothing at all about the matter.—That, Madam, is the very fault I lay to your charge; and as a punishment for it, I do insist upon it, that you immediately turn back, that is, as soon as you get to the next full stop, and read the whole chapter over again.

I have imposed this penance upon the lady, neither out of wantonness or cruelty, but from the best of motives; and therefore shall make her no apology for it when she returns back:—'Tis to rebuke a vicious taste which has crept into thousands besides herself,——of reading straight forwards, more in quest of the adventures, than of the deep erudition and knowledge which a book of this cast, if read over as it should be, would infallibly impart with them. —————The mind should be accustomed to make wise reflections, and draw curious conclusions as it goes along; the habitude of which made Pliny the younger affirm, "That he never read a book so bad, but he drew some profit

fit from it." The stories of Greece and Rome, run over without this turn and application,--- do less service, I affirm it, than the history of Parismus and Parismenus, or of the Seven Champions of England, read with it.

----- But here comes my fair Lady. Have you read over again the chapter, Madam, as I desired you? ---You have: And did you not observe the passage, upon the second reading, which admits the inference?-----Not a word like it? Then, Madam, be pleased to ponder well the last line but one of the chapter, where I take upon me to say, "It was necessary I should be born before I was christened." Had my mother, Madam, been a Papist, that consequence did not follow.*

It

* The Romish Rituals direct the baptizing of the child, in cases of danger, before it is born;---but upon this proviso, That some part or other of the child's body be seen by the baptizer;---But the Doctors of the Sorbonne, by a deliberation held amongst them, April 10, 1733,---have enlarged the powers of the midwives, by determining, That tho' no part of the child's body should appear,---that baptism shall, nevertheless, be administered to it by injection,---*par le moyend' une petite Canulle.*--Anglice, a squirt.---'Tis very strange, that St. Thomas Aquinas, who had so good a mechanical head, both for tying and untying the knots of school divinity,---should, after so much pains bestowed upon this,---give up the point at last, as a second *La chose impossible*;---"Infantes in matris uteris existentes (quoth St. Thomas) baptizari possunt nullo modo."---O Thomas! Thomas!

If

It is a terrible misfortune for this same book of mine, but more so to the Republic of Letters ; ———so that my own is quite swallowed up in the consideration of it,——that this self-same vile pruriency for fresh adventures in all things, has got so strongly into our habit and humours,——and so wholly intent are we upon satisfying the impatience of our concupiscence that way, that nothing but the gross and more carnal parts of a composition will go down :——The subtle hints and sly communication of science fly off, like spirits, upwards ;——the heavy moral escapes downwards ; and both the one and the other are as much lost to the world, as if they were still left in the bottom of the ink-horn.

I wish the male-reader has not passed by many a one, as quaint and curious as this one, in which the female-reader has been detected. I wish it may have its effects ;—and that all good people, both male and female, from her example, may be taught to think as well as read.

If the reader has the curiosity to see the question upon baptism, by injection, as presented to the Doctors of the Sorbonne,——with their consultation thereupon, it is as follows.

MEMOIRE

MEMOIRE présenté a Messieurs les Docteurs de
SORBONNE.

UN Chirurgien Accoucheur, représente à Messieurs les Docteurs de Sorbonne, qu'il y a de cas, quoique très rares, où une mere ne sçauroit accoucher, & même où l'enfant est tellement renfermé dans le sein de sa mere, qu'il ne fait paroître aucune partie de son corps, ce qui seroit un cas, suivant les Rituels, de lui conférer, du moins sous condition, le baptême. Le Chirurgien, qui consulte, prétend par le moyen d'une petite canulle, de pouvoir baptiser immédiatement l'enfant, sans faire aucun tort à la mere ——— Il demand si ce moyen, qu'il vient de proposer, est permis & légitime, et s'il peut s'en servir dans le cas qu'il vient d'exposer.

R E P O N S E.

LE Conseil estime, que la question proposée souffre de grandes difficultés. Les Théologiens posent d'un coté pour principe, que le baptême, qui est une naissance spirituelle, suppose une premiere naissance; il faut être né dans le monde, pour renaitre en Jesus Christ comme ils l'enseignent. S. Thomas, 3 part. quæst. 88. artic. 11. suit cette doctrine comme une verité constante; l'on ne peut, dit ce, S. Docteur, baptiser les enfans qui sont renfermés dans le sein de leurs Meres, et S. Thomas est fondé sur ce, que les enfans ne sont point nés, & ne peuvent être comptés parmi les autres hommes; d'où il
conclud,

conclud, qu'ils ne peuvent être l'objet d'une action extérieure, pour recevoir par leur ministère les sacremens nécessaires au salut : *Pueri in maternis uteris existentes nondum prodierunt in lucem ut cum aliis hominibus vitam ducant, unde non possunt subjici actioni humanæ, ut per eorum ministerium sacramenta recipiant ad salutem.* Les rituels ordonnent dans la pratique ce que les théologiens ont établi sur les mêmes matières, & ils défendent tous d'une manière uniforme de baptiser les enfans qui sont renfermés dans le sein de leurs meres, s'ils ne font paroître quelque partie de leurs corps. Le concours des théologiens, & des rituels, qui sont les règles des diocèses, paroît former une autorité qui termine la question présente ; cependant le conseil de conscience considérant d'un côté, que le raisonnement des théologiens est uniquement fondé sur une raison de convenance, & que la défense des rituels, suppose que l'on ne peut baptiser immédiatement les enfans ainsi renfermés dans le sein de leurs meres, ce qui est contre la supposition présente ; & d'un autre côté, considérant que les mêmes théologiens enseignent, que l'on peut risquer les sacremens que Jesus Christ a établis comme des moyens faciles, mais nécessaires pour sanctifier les hommes ; & d'ailleurs estimant, que les enfans renfermés dans le sein de leur meres, pourroient être capables de salut parce qu'ils sont capables de damnation ; — pour ces considérations, & eu égard à l'exposé, suivant lequel on assure avoir trouvé un moyen certain de baptiser ces enfans ainsi renfermés, sans faire aucun tort à la mere, le Conseil estime que l'on pourroit se servir du moyen proposé, dans la confiance qu'

il a, que Dieu n'a point laissé ces sortes d' enfans sans aucuns secours, & supposant, comme il est exposé, que le moyen dont il s' agit est propre a leur procurer le baptême; cependant comme il s' agiroit, en autorisant la pratique proposée, de changer une règle universellement établie, le Conseil croit que celui qui consulte doit s' adresser a son évêque, & a qui il appartient de juger de l' utilité, & du danger du moyen proposé, & comme, sous le bon plaisir de l' évêque, le conseil estime qu'il faut droit recourir au Pape, qui a le droit d' expliquer les règles de l' eglise, et d'y déroger dans le cas, ou la loi ne sçauroit obliger, quelque sage & quelque utile que paroisse la manière de baptiser dont il s' agit, le conseil ne pourroit, l' approuver sans le concours de ces deux autorités. On conseille au moins a celui qui consulte, de s' adresser à son évêque, & de lui faire part de la présente décision, afin que, si le prélat, entre dans les raisons sur lesquelles les docteurs soussignés s' appuyent, il puisse être autorisé dans le cas de nécessité, ou il risqueroit trop d' attendre que la permission fût demandée & accordée d' employer le moyen qu'il propose si avantageux au salut de l' enfant. Au reste le conseil, en estimant que l' on pourroit s' en servir croit cependant, que si les enfans dont il s' agit, venoient au monde, contre l' esperance, de ceux qui se seroient servis du même moyen, il seroit nécessaire de les baptiser sous condition, & en cela le conseil se conforme à tous les rituels, qui en autorisant le baptême d' un enfant qui fait paroître quelque partie de son corps, enjoignent néanmoins, & ordonnent de la baptiser sous condition,

dition, s'il vient heureusement au monde. Délibéré en Sorbonne, le 10 Avril, 1773.

A. LE MOYNE,
L. DE ROMIGNY,
DE MARCILLY.

Mr. Tristram Shandy's compliments to Messrs. Le Moyne, De Romigny and De Marcilly, hopes they all rested well the night after so tiresome a consultation.——He begs to know, whether, after the ceremony of marriage, and before that of consummation, the baptizing all the HOMUNCULI at once, slap-dash, by injection, would not be a shorter and safer cut still; on condition, as above. That if the HOMUNCULI do well and come safe into the world after this, That each and every of them shall be baptized again (sous condition.)—And provided, in the second place, That the thing can be done, which Mr. Shandy apprehends it may, par le moyen d' une petite canule, and, sans faire aucun tort à la mere.

CH A P. XXI.

——I wonder what's all that noise, and running backwards and forwards for, above stairs, quoth my father, addressing himself, after an hour and a half's silence, to my uncle Toby,——who, you must know, was sitting on the opposite side of the fire, smoking his social pipe all the time in mute contemplation of a new pair of black-plush-breeches which he had got on;—What can they be doing brother? quoth my father,—we can scarce hear ourselves talk.

I think, replied my uncle Toby, taking his pipe from his mouth, and striking the head of it two or three times upon the nail of his left thumb, as he began his sentence,——I think,

says he:—But to enter rightly into my uncle Toby's sentiments upon this matter, you must be made to enter first a little into his character, the out-lines of which I shall just give you, and then the dialogues between him and my father, will go on as well again.

—Pray what was that man's name,—for I write in such a hurry, I have no time to recollect or look for it,—who first made the observation, “That there was great inconstancy in our air and climate?” Whoever he was, 'twas a just and good observation in him.—But the corollary drawn from it, namely, “That it is this which has furnished us with such a variety of odd and whimsical characters;”—that was not his;—it was found out by another man, at least a century and a half after him:—Then again,—that this copious storehouse of original materials, is the true and natural cause that our comedies are so much better than those of France, or any other that either have, or can be wrote upon the continent,—that discovery was not fully made till about the middle of king William's reign,—when the great Dryden in writing one of his long prefaces, (if I mistake not) most fortunately hit upon it. Indeed towards the latter end of queen Ann, the great Addison began to patronize the notion, and more fully explained it to the world in one or two of his Spectators;—but the discovery was not his.—Then, fourthly and lastly, that this strange irregularity in our climate, producing so strange an irregularity in our characters,—doth thereby, in some sort, make us amends, by giving us somewhat to make us merry with when the weather will not suffer us to go out of doors,

doors,—that observation is my own;—and was struck out by me this very rainy day, March 26, 1759, and betwixt the hours of nine and ten in the morning.

Thus,—thus my fellow labourers and associates in this great harvest of our learning now ripening before our eyes; thus it is, by slow steps of casual increase, that our knowledge, physical, metaphysical, physiological, polemical, nautical, mathematical, ænigmatical, technical, biographical, romantical, chemical, and obstetrical, with fifty other branches of it, (most of 'em ending, as these do, in ical) have for these two last centuries and more, gradually been creeping upwards towards that *Apex* of their perfections, from which, if we may form a conjecture from the advances of these last seven years, we cannot possibly be far off.

When that happens, it is to be hoped, it will put an end to all kind of writings whatsoever;—the want of all kind of writing will put an end to all kind of reading;—and that in time, As war begets poverty, poverty peace,—must, in course, put an end to all kind of knowledge, —and then—we shall have all to begin over again; or, in other words, be exactly where we started.

—Happy! thrice happy Times! I only wish that the æra of my begetting, as well as the mode and manner of it, had been a little altered, or that it could have been put off with any ease to my father or mother, for some twenty or five and twenty years longer, when a man in the literary world might have stood some chance.—

But I forget my uncle Toby, whom all this

while we have left knocking the ashes out of his tobacco pipe.

His humour was of that particular species, which does honour to our atmosphere; and I should have made no scruple of ranking him amongst one of the first-rate productions of it, had not there appeared too many strong lines in it of a family-likeness, which shewed that he derived the singularity of his temper more from blood, than either wind or water, or any modification or combinations of them whatever: And I have, therefore, oft times wondered, that my father, tho' I believe he had his reasons for it, upon his observing some tokens of eccentricity in my course when I was a boy,—should never once endeavour to account for them in this way; for all the SHANDY FAMILY were of an original character throughout;—I mean the males,—the females had no character at all,—except, indeed, my great aunt DINAH, who, about sixty years ago, was married and got with child by the coachman, for which my father, according to his hypothesis of Christian names, would often say, She might thank her godfathers and godmothers.

It will seem very strange,——and I would as soon think of dropping a riddle in the reader's way, which is not my interest to do, as set him upon guessing how it could come to pass, that an event of this kind, so many years after it had happened, should be reversed for the interruption of the peace and unity, which otherwise so cordially subsisted, between my father and my uncle Toby. One would have thought, that the whole force of the misfortune should have spent and wasted itself in the family at first,—as is generally

nerally the case:—But nothing ever wrought with our family after the ordinary way. Possibly at the very time this happened, it might have something else to afflict it; and as afflictions are sent down for our good, and that as this had never done the SHANDY FAMILY any good at all, it might lye waiting till apt times and circumstances should give it an opportunity to discharge its office.—Observe, I determine nothing upon this.—My way is ever to point out to the curious, different tracts of investigation; to come at the first springs of the events I tell;—not with a pedantic Fescue,—or in the decisive manner of Tacitus, who outwits himself and his reader;—but with the officious humility of a heart devoted to the assistance merely of the inquisitive;—to them I write,—and by them I shall be read,—if any such reading as this could be supposed to hold out so long, to the very end of the world.

Why this cause of sorrow, therefore, was thus reserved for my father and uncle, is undetermined by me. But how and in what direction it exerted itself, so as to become the cause of dissatisfaction between them, after it began to operate, is what I am able to explain with great exactness, and is as follows:

My uncle TOBY SHANDY, Madam, was a gentleman, who with the virtues which usually constitute the character of a man of honour and rectitude, possessed one in a very eminent degree, which is seldom or never put into the catalogue; and that was a most extreme and unparalleled modesty of nature;—tho' I correct the word nature, for this reason, that I may not prejudge a point which must shortly come to a hearing; and that is, whether this modesty of

his was natural or acquired.—Which ever way my uncle Toby came by it, 'twas nevertheless modesty in the truest sense of it; and that is, Madam, not in regard to words, for he was so unhappy as to have very little choice in them,—but to things;—and this kind of modesty so possessed him, and it arose to such a height in him, as almost to equal, if such a thing could be, even the modesty of a woman: That female nicety, Madam, and inward cleanliness of mind and fancy, in your sex, which makes you so much the awe of ours.

You will imagine, Madam, that my uncle Toby had contracted all this from this very source;—that he had spent a great part of his time in converse with your sex; and that from a thorough knowledge of you, and the force of imitation which such fair examples render irresistible,—he had acquired this amiable turn of mind.

I wish I could say so,—for unless it was with his sister-in-law, my father's wife and my mother,—my uncle Toby scarce exchanged three words with the sex in as many years;—no, he got it, Madam, by a blow.—A blow!—Yes, Madam, it was owing to a blow from a stone, broke off by a ball from the parapet of a horn-work at the siege of Namur, which struck full upon my uncle Toby's groin.—Which way could that affect it? The story of that, Madam, is long and interesting;—but it would be running my history all upon heaps to give it to you here.—'Tis for an episode hereafter; and every circumstance relating to it in its proper place, shall be faithfully laid before you:—'Till then, it is not in my power to give further light
into

into this matter, or say more than what I have said already,—That my uncle Toby was a gentleman of unparalleled modesty, which happening to be somewhat subtilized and rarified by the constant heat of a little family pride,—they both so wrought together within him, that he could never bear to hear the affair of my aunt DINAH touched upon, but with the greatest emotion.—The least hint of it was enough to make the blood fly into his face;—but when my father enlarged upon the story in mixed companies, which the illustration of his hypothesis frequently obliged him to do,—the unfortunate blight of one of the fairest branches of the family, would set my uncle Toby's honour and modesty a bleeding, and he would often take my father aside, in the greatest concern imaginable, to expostulate and tell him, he would give him any thing in the world only to let the story rest.

My father, I believe, had the truest love and tenderness for my uncle Toby, that every one brother bore towards another, and would have done any thing in nature, which one brother in reason could have desired of another, to have made my uncle Toby's heart easy in this or any other point. But this lay out of his power.

—My father, as I told you, was a philosopher in grain,—speculative,—systematical;—and my aunt Dinah's affair was a matter of as much consequence to him, as the retrogradation of the planets to Copernicus:—The backslidings of Venus in her orbit fortified the Copernican system, called so after his name; and the backslidings, of my aunt Dinah in her orbit, did the same service in establishing my father's system,

which, I trust, will for ever hereafter be called the Shandean System, after him.

In any other family dishonour, my father, I believe, had as nice a sense of shame as any man whatever;—and neither he, nor, I dare say, Copernicus, would have divulged the affair in either case, or have taken the least notice of it to the world, but for the obligations they owed, as they thought, to truth.—Amicus Plato; my father would say, construing the words to my uncle Toby, as he went along, Amicus Plato; that is, DINAH was my aunt;—sed magis amica veritas—but TRUTH is my sister.

This contrariety of humours betwixt my father and my uncle, was the source of many a fraternal squabble. The one could not bear to hear the tale of family disgrace recorded,—and the other would scarce ever let a day pass to an end without some hint of it.

For God's sake, my uncle Toby would cry,—and for my sake, and for all our sakes, my dear brother Shandy,—do let this story of our aunt's and her ashes sleep in peace;—how can you,—how can you have so little feeling and compassion for the character of our family:—What is the character of a family to an hypothesis? My father would reply.—Nay, if you come to that—what is the life of a family.—The life of a family!—My uncle Toby would say, throwing himself back in his arm-chair and lifting up his hands, his eyes, and one leg.—Yes the life,—my father would say, maintaining his point. How many thousands of them are there every year that comes, cast away (in all civilized countries at least)—and considered as nothing but common air, in competition of an hypothesis.

hypothesis. In my plain sense of things, my uncle Toby, would answer,—every such instance is downright MURDER, let who will commit it. —There lies your mistake, my father would reply;—for, in *Foro Scientiæ* there is no such thing as MURDER,—’tis only DEATH, brother.

My uncle Toby would never offer to answer this by any other kind of argument, than that of whistling half a dozen bars of *Lillabullero*. —You must know it was the usual channel through which his passions got vent, when any thing shocked or surprized him;—but especially when any thing, which he deemed very absurd, was offer’d.

As not one of our logical writers, nor any of the commentators upon them, that I remember, have thought proper to give a name to this particular species of argument,—I here take the liberty to do it myself for two reasons. First, That, in order to prevent all confusion in disputes, it may stand as much distinguished for ever, from every other species of argument,—as the *Argumentum ad Verecundiam*, *ex Absurdo*, *ex Fortiori*, or any other argument whatsoever:—And, secondly, That it may be said by my children’s children, when my head is laid to rest,—that their learned grand-father’s head had been busied to as much purpose once, as other people’s:—That he had invented a name,—and generously thrown it into the TREASURY of the *Ars Logica*, for one of the most unanswerable arguments in the whole science. And if the end of disputation is more to silence than convince,—they may add, if they please, to one of the best arguments too.

I do therefore by these presents, strictly order
and

and command, That it be known and distinguished by the name and title of the Argumentum Fistulatorium, and no other;—and that it rank hereafter with the Argumentum Baculinum, and the Argumentum ad Crumenam, and for ever hereafter be treated of in the same chapter.

As for the Argumentum Tripodium, which is never used but by the woman against the man;—and the Argumentum ad Rem, which, contrary wise, is made use of by the man only against the woman:—As these two are enough in conscience for one lecture;—and, moreover, as the one is the best answer to the other,—let them likewise be kept apart, and be treated of in a place by themselves.

C H A P. XXII.

TH E learned Bishop Hall, I mean the famous Dr. Joseph Hall, who was Bishop of Exeter in King James the first's reign, tells us in one of his Decades, at the end of his divine art of meditation, imprinted at London, in the year 1610, by John Beal, dwelling in Aldersgate-street, "That it is an abominable thing for a man to commend himself;"—and I really think it is so.

And yet on the other hand, when a thing is executed in a masterly kind of a fashion, which thing is not likely to be found out;—I think it is full as abominable, that a man should lose the honour of it, and go out of the world with the conceit of it rotting in his head.

This is precisely my situation.

For in this long digression which I was accidentally

dentally led into, as in all my digressions (one only excepted) there is a master-stroke of digressive skill, the merit of which has all along, I fear, been overlooked by my reader,—not for want of penetration in him, but because 'tis an excellence seldom looked for, or expected indeed, in a digression;—and it is this: That tho' my digressions are all fair, as you observe,—and that I fly off from what I am about, as far and as often too as any writer in Great-Britain; yet I constantly take care to order affairs so, that my main business does not stand still in my absence.

I was just going, for example, to have given you the great out-lines of my uncle Toby's most whimsical character;—when my aunt Dinah and the coachman came across us, and led us a vagary some millions of miles into the very heart of the planetary system: Notwithstanding all this you perceive that the drawing of my uncle Toby's character went on gently all the time;—not the great contours of it,—that was impossible,—but some familiar strokes and faint designations of it, were here and there touch'd in, as we went along, so that you are much better acquainted with my uncle Toby now than you was before.

By this contrivance the machinery of my work is of a species by itself; two contrary motions are introduced into it, and reconciled, which were thought to be at variance with each other. In a word, my work is digressive, and it is progressive too,—and at the same time.

This, Sir, is a very different story from that of the earth's moving round her axis, in her diurnal rotation, with her progress in her elliptick orbit which brings about the year, and consti-

tutes

tutes that variety and vicissitude of seasons we enjoy;—though I own it suggested the thought, —as I believe the greatest of our boasted improvements and discoveries have come from some such trifling hints.

Digressions, incontestably, are the sunshine; —they are the life, the soul of reading; —take them out of this book for instance, —you might as well take the book along with them; —one cold eternal winter would reign in every page of it; restore them to the writer; —he steps forth like a bridegroom, —bids All hail; brings in variety, and forbids the appetite to fail.

All the dexterity is in the good cookery and management of them, so as to be not only for the advantage of the reader, but also of the author, whose distress in this matter, is truly pitiable: For if he begins a digression, —from that moment, I observe, his whole work stands stock-still; ————and if he goes on with his main work, —then there is an end of his digression.

———This is vile work.———For which reason, from the beginning of this, you see, I have constructed the main work and the adventitious parts of it with such intersections, and have so complicated and involved the digressive and progressive movements, one wheel within another, that the whole machine, in general, has been kept a going; —and, what's more, it shall be kept agoing these forty years, if it pleases the fountain of health to bless me so long with life and good spirits.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXIII.

I Have a strong propensity in me to begin this chapter very nonsensically, and I will not balk my fancy.——Accordingly I set off thus.

If the fixture of Momus's glass, in the human breast, according to the proposed emendation of that arch-critick, had taken place,——first, This foolish consequence would certainly have followed,——That the very wisest and the very gravest of us all, in one coin or other, must have paid window-money every day of our lives.

And, secondly, That had the said glass been there set up, nothing more would have been wanting, in order to have taken a man's character, but to have taken a chair and gone softly, as you would to a dioptrical bee-hive, and looked in,—view'd the soul stark naked;—observed all her motions,—her machinations;——traced all her maggots from their first engendering to their crawling forth;——watched her loose in her frisks, her gambols, her capricios; and after some notice of her more solemn deportment, consequent upon such frisks, &c.——then taken your pen and ink and set down nothing but what you had seen, and could have sworn to:——But this is an advantage not to be had by the biographer in this planet,—in the planet Mercury (belike) it may be so, if not, better still for him;—for there the intense heat of the country, which is proved by computators, from its vicinity to the sun, to be more than equal to that of red hot iron,——must, I think, long ago have vitrified the bodies of the inhabitants,

tants, (as the efficient cause) to suit them for the climate (which is the final cause); so, that, betwixt them both, all the tenements of their souls, from top to bottom, may be nothing else, for ought the soundest philosophy can shew to the contrary, but one fine transparent body of clear glass (bating the umbilical knot);—so, that till the inhabitants grow old and tolerably wrinkled, whereby the rays of light, in passing thro' them, become so monstrously refracted,—or return reflected from their surfaces in such transverse lines to the eye, that a man cannot be seen thro';—his soul might as well, unless, for more ceremony,—or the trifling advantage which the umbilical point gave her,—might, upon all other accounts, I say, as well play the fool out o' doors as in her own house.

But this, as I said above, is not the case of the inhabitants of this earth;—our minds shine not through the body, but are wrapt up here in a dark covering of uncrystalized flesh and blood; so that if we would come to the specifick characters of them, we must go some other way to work.

Many, in good truth, are the ways which human wit has been forced to take to do this thing with exactness.

Some, for instance, draw all their characters with wind instruments.——Virgil takes notice of that way in the affair of Dido and Æneas;—but it is as fallacious as the breath of fame;—and, moreover, bespeaks a narrow genius. I am not ignorant that the Italians pretend to a mathematical exactness of their designations of one particular sort of character among them, from the forte or piano of a certain wind instrument they

they use,——which they say is infallible.——I dare not mention the name of the instrument in this place;——’tis sufficient we have it amongst us,——but never think of making a drawing by it;——this is ænigmatical, and intended to be so, at least, ad populum:—And therefore I beg, Madam, when you come here, that you read on as fast as you can, and never stop to make any inquiry about it.

There are others again, who will draw a man’s character from no other helps in the world, but merely from his evacuations;——but this often gives a very incorrect out-line,——unless, indeed, you take a sketch of his repletions too; and by correcting one drawing from the other, compound one good figure out of them both.

I should have no objection to this method, but that I think it must smell too strong of the lamp,——and be rendered still more operose, by forcing you to have an eye to the rest of his Non-Naturals.——Why the most natural actions of a man’s life should be call’d his Non-Naturals,——is another question.

There are others, fourthly, who disdain every one of these expedients;——not from any fertility of their own, but from the various ways of doing it, which they have borrowed from the honourable devices which the Pentagraphic Brethren* of the brush have shewn in taking copies.—These, you must know, are your great historians.

One of these you will see drawing a full-length character against the light;——that’s
illiberal,

* Pentagraph, an instrument to copy prints and pictures mechanically, and in any proportion.

illiberal,—dishonest,—and hard upon the character of the man who sits.

Others to mend the matter, will make a drawing of you in the Camera;—that is most unfair of all,—because, there you are sure to be represented in some of your most ridiculous attitudes.

To avoid all and every one of these errors, in giving you my uncle Toby's character, I am determined to draw it by no mechanical help whatever;—nor shall my pencil be guided by any one wind instrument which ever was blown upon, either on this, or on the other side of the Alps;—nor will I consider either his repletions or his discharges,—or touch upon his Non-Naturals;—but, in a word, I will draw my uncle Toby's character from his HOBBY HORSE.

C H A P. XXIV.

IF I was not morally sure that the reader must be out of all patience for my uncle Toby's character,—I would here previously have convinced him, that there is no instrument so fit to draw such a thing with, as that which I have pitch'd upon.

A man and his HOBBY HORSE, tho' I cannot say that they act and re-act exactly after the same manner in which the soul and body do upon each other: Yet doubtless there is a communication between them of some kind, and my opinion rather is, that there is something in it more of the manner of electrified bodies,—and that by means of the heated parts of the rider, which come immediately into contact with the back of the

the HOBBY HORSE.—By long journies and much friction, it so happens that the body of the rider is at length fill'd as full of HOBBY-HORSICAL matter as it can hold;—so that if you are able to give but a clear description of the nature of the one, you may form a pretty exact notion of the genius and character of the other.

Now the HOBBY-HORSE which my uncle Toby always rode upon, was, in my opinion, an HOBBY-HORSE well worth giving a description of, if it was only upon the score of his great singularity; for you might have travelled from York to Dover,—from Dover to Penzance in Cornwall, and from Penzance to York back again, and not have seen such another upon the road; or if you had seen such a one, whatever haste you had been in, you must infallibly have stopped to have taken a view of him. Indeed, the gait and figure of him was so strange, and so utterly unlike was he, from his head to his tail, to any one of the whole species, that it was now and then made a matter of dispute,—whether he was really a HOBBY-HORSE or no: But as the Philosopher would use no other argument to the sceptic, who disputed with him against the reality of motion, save that of rising up upon his legs, and walking across the room;—so would my uncle Toby use no other argument to prove his HOBBY-HORSE was a HOBBY-HORSE indeed, but by getting upon his back and riding him about;—leaving the world after that to determine the point as it thought fit.

In good truth, my uncle Toby mounted him with so much pleasure, and he carried my uncle Toby so well,—that he troubled his head very little with what the world either said or thought about it.

It is now high time, however that I give you a description of him:—But to go on regularly, I only beg you will give me leave to acquaint you first, how my uncle Toby came by him.

C H A P. XXV.

THE wound in my uncle Toby's groin, which he received at the siege of Namur, rendering him unfit for the service, it was thought expedient he should return to England, in order, if possible, to be set to rights.

He was four years totally confined,—part of it to his bed, and all of it to his room; and in the course of his cure, which was all that time in hand, suffered unspeakable miseries,—owing to a succession of exfoliations from the os pubis, and the outward edge of that part of the coxendix called the os ileum,—both which bones were dismally crush'd, as much by the irregularity of the stone, which I told you was broke off the parapet,—as by its size,—(though it was pretty large) which inclined the surgeon all along to think, that the great injury which it had done my uncle Toby's groin, was more owing to the gravity of the stone itself, than to the projectile force of it,—which he would often tell him was a great happiness.

My father at that time was just beginning business in London, and had taken a house;—and as the truest friendship and cordiality subsisted between the two brothers,—and that my father thought my uncle Toby could no where be so well nursed and taken care of as in his own house,

house,—he assign'd him the very best apartment in it.———And what was a much more sincere mark of his affection still, he would never suffer a friend or an acquaintance to step into the house on any occasion, but he would take him by the hand, and lead him up stairs to see his brother Toby, and chat an hour by his bed side.

The history of a soldier's wound beguiles the pain of it—my uncle's visitors at least thought so, and in their daily calls upon him from the courtesy arising out of that belief, they would frequently turn the discourse to that subject,—and from that subject the discourse would generally roll on to the siege itself.

These conversations were infinitely kind; and my uncle Toby received great relief from them, and would have received much more, but that they brought him into some unforeseen perplexities, which, for three months together, retarded his cure greatly; and if he had not hit upon an expedient to extricate himself out of them, I verily believe they would have laid him in his grave.

What these perplexities of my uncle Toby were,——'tis impossible for you to guess;——if you could,—I should blush; not as a relation, not as a man,—nor even as a woman,——but I should blush as an author; inasmuch as I set no small store by myself upon this very account that my reader has never yet been able to guess at any thing. And in this, Sir, I am of so nice and singular a humour, that if I thought you was able to form the least judgment or probable conjecture to yourself, of what was to come in the next page,—I would tear it out of my book.